United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

13th PLENARY MEETING

Friday, 1 October 1993 at 3 p.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

ADDRESS BY HIS MAJESTY KING MSWATI III, HEAD OF STATE OF THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, His Majesty King Mswati III, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

King MSWATI III: I am delighted and honoured to have this opportunity once more to address this distinguished gathering.

I bring with me from the Kingdom of Swaziland the greetings and good wishes of Her Majesty Indlovukazi and the whole Swazi nation to our fellow Members and friends.

Before I begin my remarks, I should like, on behalf of the Kingdom of Swaziland, to express my deep condolences to the people of India, who have suffered so much in the last 24 hours. Our thoughts and prayers reach out to the families and friends of the victims of the tragic earthquake as they struggle to overcome the effects of disaster. May Almighty God protect all in the region from further suffering.

Mr. President, on behalf of the Swaziland delegation, let me offer my sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of this forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. Many issues of vital importance to the world will be discussed during this session, and we are entirely confident in your ability to lead us to a successful conclusion in all our deliberations.

We should also like to express our deep appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, who guided the proceedings of the forty-seventh session to such great effect.

We are meeting at a time when our Organization is faced with a number of concerns, whose challenge to our resources, and to our unity, is perhaps without parallel in the 48 years of our existence.

We Members are fortunate that our success in meeting these challenges lies to a large extent on the shoulders of our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros-Ghali, whose performance over the last two years has fully justified our confidence in him. The Kingdom of Swaziland pays a tribute to his skill, vision and leadership, as we face increasing challenges - internal as well as external - to our Organization. We are confident in his ability to act on behalf of us all, as the United Nations strives to maintain peace and security throughout this troubled world and as we continue to fulfil the hopes and wishes of our peoples through the promotion of social and economic developme in all Member States. We offer our Secretary-General t

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, Room C-178, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

93-86716 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.13
20 October 1993

ENGLISH

fullest support and encouragement in the difficult times ahead.

Swaziland is delighted to extend the hand of friendship to our six new Members, including our own African continent's newest nation, Eritrea. Earlier this year, we praised the United Nations-sponsored elections, which allowed Eritrea a peaceful transition to independence, and we welcomed it to the Organization of African Unity family of African nations. Now, that welcome is extended to this larger family.

The admission of these new countries is further proof of the importance we place on embracing all peoples within our Organization: the principle of universality - of representing all the nations of the world - is one that has been at the very centre of the United Nation's existence, since our establishment in 1945.

All groups of people, all nations, regardless of size or history, have a contribution to make towards ensuring a safer, more prosperous world, in which we can live and work in peace and provide the promise of economic and political security for future generations.

Just one month ago Swaziland celebrated an event of great importance in the history of the Kingdom. Twenty-five years ago, on 6 September 1968, we regained our independence and resumed our rightful place in the world once more, as a free, sovereign nation.

To mark such an historic occasion, we hosted a large number of Heads of State and other representatives of countries from every corner of our globe for three days of celebration and rejoicing.

While the event was one of great national jubilation, and an opportunity to give thanks to God for the many blessings he continues to bestow on us, it was also a chance to review the progress of the nation's development; to examine our successes and failures; and to learn from the lessons of our first 25 years as a nation reborn.

We were also able to confirm the steps we are taking to continue in our quest to bring all Swazis once more under the protection of our leadership. A committee has been established and negotiations are under way to restore the land and the people that have been lost to us over the last century. We shall be keeping this Organization fully informed of developments.

Most prominent among Swaziland's blessings have been the peace and stability we have continued to enjoy throughout these times of great change and disorder. As a nation, we confirmed how important a role our unity plays in preserving the conditions for our stability, and demonstrated what we could do to ensure that those conditions will be enjoyed by future generations.

We acknowledged that two factors have contributed most to our unity: first, the emphasis we have always placed on those aspects of our national character that make us unique from others - our traditions, our customs and our culture; and, secondly, our policy of always acting in consensus, wherever possible, on issues of national importance.

These traditional values which continue to guide and lead us today may seem old-fashioned and out of date in today's world. But they have served Swaziland well and will continue to bind the Swazi nation together for many generations to come.

I do not wish to give the impression that time has stood still for us in our remote corner of the African continent - far from it. Swaziland, too, has felt the winds of change which have blown throughout the world; and together, as a family, we have bent to accommodate them, for the good of the nation as a whole.

One current example is the process of political reform on which we are embarked.

As I mentioned a few moments ago, Swaziland is governed by the principle of rule by consensus of the people. Through the ages, our leaders have ruled with the consent of the nation, and this principle continues today. So when the effects of global political reform began to be felt in the Kingdom, all Swazis were given the opportunity to offer their individual opinions on the need for change.

The result was a series of recommendations by the majority of the Kingdom to bring about a number of democratic reforms, of which the most important concerned changes in our electoral system to allow direct and accountable representation in Parliament.

The decision by the people to implement the changes was announced last October, and the first stage of elections under the new system was successfully conducted a week ago. The final stage will take place in 10 days' time.

Our new-found political maturity has also resulted in the lifting of certain restrictive measures which, for various reasons, had been thought necessary in the past.

These moves, and indeed the process throughout, has been warmly welcomed and supported wholeheartedly by the international community. More importantly, it has fulfilled the wishes of the vast majority in Swaziland.

Ahead of us lies the implementation of the other recommendations made by the Kingdom. We shall take these steps forward in the way we always conduct business - quietly, peacefully and with the consent of all our people.

I give this outline of recent reforms in Swaziland not from any need to justify our actions to the outside world, nor indeed to gain the approval of the international community. No, I simply offer it as an example of the importance we, as a nation, place on our unity, and on the principle of meeting fresh challenges together, as a family.

Swaziland's internal policy is mirrored in our dealings with the outside world. Throughout our history, we have consistently pursued a policy of encouraging the settlement of all disputes through peaceful dialogue and negotiation. We are heartened that this principle is shared by the United Nations in its attempts to maintain global peace and security.

It is a distressing fact that the challenges facing the United Nations in this regard have reached a level perhaps without equal since its establishment at the end of the last global conflict.

The consequences of the breakup of the former Soviet Union, in particular, have focused world attention on continental Europe, where the situations in the former Yugoslavia and Georgia continue to give us all great cause for concern.

The horrors of the war in Bosnia reinforce the belief that we need some way of limiting the effects of tension before they are allowed to expand and explode.

Swaziland has fully supported the efforts of the United Nations and the European Community to bring about a negotiated settlement to the conflict; and we recognize the work of those involved in the process towards peace.

Special mention must be made of the contribution of the members of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia, who risk their lives daily in their courageous attempts to bring relief to the suffering of so many. We urge the leaders of the three sides to find the basis for a peaceful settlement before the start of a winter which many thousands will otherwise not have a chance of surviving.

Not far away, in Georgia, we have witnessed with concern the unfolding of another tragedy whose consequences may well be felt for some time to come. Swaziland urges those involved, with the support from those having influence in the area, to learn from the suffering of Bosnia and to find a peaceful, negotiated settlement to the dispute that has ruined the stability of a nation which so recently rejoiced in its new-found independence.

The last two weeks have seen the internal political struggle in Russia reach a critical point, constituting a very serious threat to the stability of that great country.

Most countries in the world have learned from bitter experience that there is no easy path to reform, no certain blueprint, no overnight success.

As a country with enormous strategic and historical importance, Russia has held our attention throughout its often painful transition, and our thoughts are with its people during this latest internal crisis. Swaziland joins the rest of the international community in supporting a peaceful resolution to the constitutional struggle on whose outcome the peace of the entire region may depend.

Cyprus continues to give cause for concern to my delegation, fully 19 years after the short but destructive conflict that brought division to that unhappy island. Swaziland shares with Cyprus membership in the British Commonwealth of Nations, and we support the untiring efforts of our Secretary-General to promote dialogue between Greeks and Turks so that a lasting settlement, acceptable to all, may be found.

Closer to home, for many of our brotherly African countries conflict and internal strife continue to be the major obstacles in the way of the development of the continent as a whole. Of particular distress to us in southern Africa is the appalling disaster which has overtaken our brothers in Angola, where more tragedies occur each day than anywhere else in the world. If any country has suffered enough it is surely Angola. No

reason can possibly justify the scale of the disaster suffered by so many. We therefore support the measures taken by the United Nations to bring about an end to the conflict, and we appeal to those responsible for the continuation of the suffering to allow sense and reason to prevail. The elections last September were judged free and fair by organizations of which we are a member and whose views we respect. We appeal to both sides to come together in a spirit of understanding and compromise to achieve a lasting peace for the whole country. The efforts of our United Nations Special Envoy in this difficult and dangerous assignment deserve our fullest support.

On the other side of our continent, we continue with grave concern to look on the situation in Somalia, where, despite the efforts of the large United Nations force and a large measure of success at the start of the operation, a formula for lasting peace still cannot be found. Swaziland gives due praise to the members of the peace-keeping force as they attempt to maintain the conditions in which food and medical relief can reach those most in need. Clearly, the support of the international community will be necessary for the foreseeable future - despite the enormous drain this will mean on our limited resources - as efforts are made to help establish suitable political conditions in the country to encourage sustainable development.

Despite these setbacks to global peace, the last 12 months have seen considerable successes recorded in other areas, many of which owe much to the efforts of the United Nations. In this Hall on Monday, President Clinton spoke of the determination of his Administration to continue with the policy of encouraging an end, once and for all, to the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Swaziland supports any measure to limit the ability of all countries to make political use of weapons of mass destruction, and we call on all the nuclear Powers to give the initiative the support it deserves.

Of perhaps greatest immediate significance in the area of global peace, however, was the recent signing of the peace accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Swaziland joins the rest of the world in welcoming with enormous relief this sign of real progress towards peace in the Middle East. We acknowledge those who have contributed to this first, vital step towards a settlement of the crisis which has afflicted the region for so long. In particular, the determination of the two leaders, Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat, to bring about the conditions for a settlement deserves the praise of us all.

Meanwhile, along with the rest of the world, we recognize that many challenges lie ahead in the process of reconciliation and peaceful resettlement. Above all, there must be a firm commitment to the process from all nations in the region. The responsibility for a successful future lies as much with the neighbouring countries as it does with Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Swaziland therefore welcomes the immediate favourable response to the treaty from many in the region, and we offer our wholehearted support to the process begun with that historic handshake. Our hopes and prayers for lasting peace are with the people of the Middle East.

The successful conclusion of another long-running conflict owes much to the efforts of the United Nations and is worth highlighting. The free and fair elections in Cambodia have, hopefully, brought an end to many years of suffering by the Cambodian people and fully justified the support we, as Member States, gave to the process.

Challenges to peace in that country remain, however, and, while welcoming the moves to unite the people behind a newly established monarchy, Swaziland is concerned that any remaining differences be resolved through negotiation, and not by the means that, in the past, gave rise to such hatred and division among the Cambodian people.

Africa, too, has experienced encouraging developments over the past 12 months. Of particular relevance to Swaziland have been the ongoing peace processes in the neighbouring countries of Mozambique and South Africa.

Later this month we shall formally begin the process of returning the tens of thousands of Mozambican refugees to their homeland. Swaziland has hosted these unfortunate victims of civil war for many years, with the assistance of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We praise all those who have contributed to the peace effort. Above all, we recognize the willingness of both sides to bring an end to the suffering of so many fellow-countrymen. We therefore acknowledge the commitment to peace of President Chissano and Mr. Dhlakama, who have given an example to the leaders of other countries experiencing internal struggles. We pray that the peace process will be allowed to run its course, with the assistance of the United Nations force that is stationed in the country. Swaziland stands ready to help Mozambique to regain its significance in the region.

The situation in South Africa - our other neighbour - too gives some reason for long-term hope of a peaceful transition to majority rule and the birth of a new South Africa. This view has been strengthened by the speeches that President De Klerk and Mr. Mandela made in the United States last week. The negotiation process has proceeded in accordance with a tight timetable, and important successes have been recorded. I refer, for example, to the recent agreement concerning conditions for the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council.

The setting of a date for elections - April 1994 - is of particular importance as it provides a focus for the black community, which has been denied the vote for so long. However, major obstacles remain if next year's election date is to be met. Prominent among these is the distressing continued violence in many sections of South African society. This has resulted in widespread loss of confidence in the peace process. We appeal to the leaders of all parties in South Africa to impose the maximum restraint on those who threaten the real progress that has been made so far. We pray that reason will prevail and that the existing forum for peaceful negotiation will be used for the resolution of any differences.

Mr. Musuka (Zambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

A matter of equal concern, and with the potential to give rise to greater problems in the long term, is the absence from the negotiations of representatives of large sections of the country. Empty chairs at the negotiating table will result in an incomplete solution to the problem of creating a new South Africa. All South Africans must be represented at the talks, so that each may feel that he is a part of the solution. Conditions must be found to give all in South Africa, regardless of race or belief, a voice in the transition process.

In the meantime, in accordance with the wishes of the majority of South Africans, Swaziland supports the call for the lifting of the remaining economic and trade sanctions against South Africa, to enable the country to begin the long and difficult process of resolving the many development challenges it faces.

Swaziland looks forward to welcoming a new South Africa as a major force in the development of the region.

Further north in our continent, the recent signing of the peace accord in Liberia will, we hope, bring to an end a long and painful chapter in the history of that unhappy country. Swaziland endorses the offer of the United Nations earlier this year to assist in the electoral process. We appeal to all Liberian leaders to respect the peace process and to put their faith in the electoral system, so that the country may begin the task of rebuilding in an atmosphere of national unity and conciliation.

As we examine the extent of United Nations involvement in peace-keeping operations around the world, it is clear that we face major questions about our ability to cope with future conflict situations. While Swaziland salutes the courage and dedication of the 80,000 men and women of the various United Nations forces on assignment in 17 separate operations throughout the world, we support the call of other Members for a full examination of the way in which our peace-keeping operations are managed, with a view to securing the maximum benefit from our limited resources.

We are approaching our fiftieth anniversary, and this is a suitable moment to review our past performance in this area and to draw on our collective experience so that in future peace-keeping roles we may make the most efficient use of our resources. Swaziland therefore welcomes the call, in the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace", for discussion of these vital issues during the current session.

At the beginning of my address I expressed the Swazi delegation's welcome for the accession of six new Members as an indication of the Organization's respect for the principle of universality. We confirmed that it is a basic human right of all peoples to be represented at the United Nations so that the widest possible range of opinions and experience may be pooled, and the benefits of the Organization shared by all countries.

The President returned to the Chair.

Yet the Kingdom of Swaziland has enjoyed a long and happy relationship with 21 million people who believe that they have had no representation here since 1971: I refer to the people of the Republic of China.

For the past 25 years the Republic of China has shown itself to be a true friend of Swaziland. We have benefited from the experience of development which has lifted the Republic of China to a position high on the list of industrialized nations. The rest of the world has been excluded from that experience and from the positive contribution that we feel the Republic of China can make to the international community. It is a contribution that the

Government and the people of that nation have demonstrated their will and desire to make. And 21 million people feel that they are denied the right of representation here in the United Nations by men and women of their own choice. In the interest of equity and justice, their collective voice deserves to be heard.

Swaziland therefore supports the call from other Member States for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to look into the issue of the Republic of China's re-entry into the United Nations.

Following from the issue of basic human rights among nations, Swaziland attached great importance to our attendance at the Conference in Vienna last June. We made clear the priority we attach to the promotion and protection of human rights in our own country and the important role we believe that plays in the maintenance of peace and stability throughout the world.

The principle of equality among nations is one that has guided our foreign policy since independence, and we join other Member States in welcoming the Conference's Declaration and Programme of Action. We look forward to the discussion here in the General Assembly of proposals agreed at the Conference, and we stand ready to implement them where necessary.

For many years after independence the Kingdom of Swaziland enjoyed a period of steady growth and reasonable prosperity, despite the difficulties experienced by other developing nations in our region. The world-wide economic recession and the drought years of 1991 and 1992 meant an end to the expansion of our economy, and the Kingdom braced itself for some tough times ahead. As a developing country we are heavily reliant on the economies of nations that are more industrialized than ours, and the failure of the projected world-wide recovery in 1993 has added to our despair.

We have recognized that there are internal measures we must take ourselves, and we are active in attempting to strengthen our industrial and agricultural base; but we remain dependent on outside support to finance programmes to help achieve our objectives.

The Kingdom has begun a programme of action for our own economic development, based on the principle of national consensus that was so successful in our political reforms. The United Nations continues to support us in the planning and coordination of our efforts, and we will need that support for some time to come if we are to experience the growth we need for the economic security of future generations.

One area in which we have been concentrating much effort is the expansion of our export markets and our trade relations with other countries. We have therefore been following anxiously the prolonged process of concluding the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) talks. We have a saying in Africa: "When the elephants fight, the ants get squashed." For our small, developing nation, much depends on the successful outcome of the talks. We are, in particular, looking forward to an international trade package which will take full account of the needs of the developing nations and will make allowances for current trade agreements between us and the first world. Another deadline is just two months away. We appeal to the world's major economic Powers to consider the long-term fate of our people and not to be seduced by the short-term political advantage to be gained from indecision and delay.

Although we will be heavily reliant on the outcome of the GATT talks, Swaziland and the other countries in the Southern and Eastern African regions have followed the example of other major trading blocs around the world and formed our own regional common markets. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), of which Swaziland is currently Vice-Chairman, and the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) for Eastern and Southern African States are models of inter-nation cooperation. Our objective is the improvement of all our peoples through closer economic and trade cooperation and development between member States. Through our membership in these trade organizations, we are trying to open up more regional markets to complement those we have established overseas. Our long-term target is to achieve a measure of regional self-reliance, and it is one that deserves the support of the developed world. SADC, the PTA and other arrangements like them will succeed as long as we can count on the support and commitment of organizations such as the United Nations. I commend them to this Assembly.

Swaziland fully agrees with the United Nations in attaching importance to the concept of sustainable development among Member nations, and we welcome your call, Mr. President, for an agenda for development to have priority focus in this session. In this regard, we intend to take a full and active part in next year's conference on population and development, and the Heads of State summit on social issues in 1995.

The concept of a holistic approach to development - taking into account issues such as the environment, human

settlement, population management, productive employment and the easing of poverty - is one that forms the basis of our own nation's policies.

We are working hard to ensure that our development is sustainable for the benefit of future generations of Swazis - just as our forefathers made sacrifices to ensure a secure and prosperous heritage for us.

We therefore welcome any initiative that places population concerns at the centre of all social, economic, political and environmental activities and we look forward to a worthwhile output from Cairo next year and from the social Summit in 1995.

It has been an eventful and exciting year. The first steps have been taken towards the resolution of many long-standing problems, but many challenges remain.

The need for internal adjustments in the administration of the Organization has been clearly identified and we look forward to monitoring more effective operations as a result of the initiatives taken by the Secretary-General. Despite these, the United Nations can be proud of its record over the past twelve months and the Kingdom of Swaziland salutes all those who have contributed to the many substantial achievements we have recorded.

I should like to give my personal assurance that Swaziland will demonstrate its confidence in the Organization by paying its dues on time and with great willingness in the firm expectation that they will be put to the best possible use. We urge all other Member States to take the same attitude so that the Organization might have the funds available to undertake the programmes of assistance that are so desperately needed throughout the world.

In conclusion I should like to take this opportunity, on behalf of Her Majesty, the Indlovukazi, and the whole Swazi nation, to express my deep gratitude to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and all its sister agencies, for the many programmes of assistance undertaken in Swaziland since its independence.

We believe that the United Nations remains the only truly global forum for confronting the challenges facing the world today, and the only body with the resources and the commitment to implement the solutions. The world would indeed be a more troubled place without the combined efforts of all of us here.

We take pride in reaffirming our commitment to the principles and ideals contained in our founding Charter.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland for the statement he has just made.

His Majesty King Mswati III, Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 *(continued)*

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. MOCK (Austria) *(interpretation from French)*: I should like to begin my statement by expressing my most sincere condolences to the victims of the terrible disaster which has taken place in India and to the Indian population.

Please allow me first of all to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to your important office. I know that your many years of experience as your country's Permanent Representative at the United Nations and your universally admired expertise will greatly enhance the deliberations of this body.

Since the Gulf War the United Nations - whether in mediating among warring factions or in saving lives in war-torn areas - has been more than ever at the centre of world politics, with its tireless struggle for sustainable development, its daily fight to protect human rights and its active peace-keeping. In Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the international community has a United Nations Secretary-General committed to the difficult task of adapting the Organization to a much-altered world political climate and of strengthening it to face the new challenges ahead. I have great respect for his incisive judgement and tireless service which provided us with his visionary report "An Agenda for Peace".

The Secretary-General's first official visit to Austria last June gave us an opportunity to discuss the most pressing challenges facing the United Nations in the post-communist era. They have special importance for Vienna as one of the three official seats of the Organization. We would like to see an Organization whose structure, management and financing enable it to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted to it in the Charter. In this context we have taken note with satisfaction of the

Secretary-General's assurance to strengthen the United Nations Office at Vienna.

One of the United Nation's most important tasks is to safeguard human rights. The Organization's international efforts in this area have saved human lives, brought about the release of prisoners, prevented torture, helped to locate missing persons, promoted health and literacy programmes and safeguarded the rights of displaced persons and refugees.

In June this year my country had the honour to host thousands of delegates and representatives of non-governmental organizations in Vienna at one of the most significant events in this field: the World Conference on Human Rights.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank once again all participants for their constructive cooperation and commitment and for their valuable support they gave me as President of the Conference. It was the active collaboration of the participating States and the effective support of the United Nations Secretariat, under the Assistant Secretary-General Fall, that made the Conference such a resounding success, one that would not have been possible without the committed participation of the non-governmental organizations, which sent more than 2,700 representatives to the World Conference. Never before have so many human-rights organizations been involved to such an extent, at all levels, in the events of such a major international Conference as was the case at Vienna.

With the final document of the Conference, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the international community has adopted a document of major significance. It is a forward-looking, action-based platform, which not only strengthens basic principles but also represents an important advance in the protection of human rights - all human rights - world wide. The document affirms the universal character of human rights and the principle that the protection of human rights is a legitimate concern not only of individuals and States but also of the entire international community. It establishes a link between human rights, democracy and development and underscores the special responsibility of States to take concerted measures to protect particularly vulnerable groups in society. It calls for a strengthening of the United Nations Human Rights Centre and for increasing its resources so that it can effectively meet rising demands.

When the report of the World Conference comes up for discussion before the General Assembly in the weeks ahead, we must do more than complacently acknowledge its accomplishments. The results of the World Conference should be translated into concrete action in all areas, from the rights of women and children to the integration of the handicapped, the plight of indigenous peoples and the rights of minorities to the right to development. Such new elements as a High Commissioner for Human Rights or a Decade for Human Rights must also be among the decisions of this session of the General Assembly. Without underemphasizing other elements of the Conference's outcome, I note that the recommendation to create an office of High Commissioner for Human Rights has been highlighted by some eminent speakers, among them United States President Clinton, the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Mr. Kozyrev, and the Norwegian Prime Minister, Mrs. Brundtland.

Around the world, we are coming to realize that active protection of minorities is an elementary part of the political and social stability of the countries in which they live, an insurance against regional conflicts. In this spirit, the States meeting at Vienna reaffirmed their commitment to the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, adopted at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

As a major media event, the Conference also contributed greatly to sensitizing the public around the world to the issue of human rights. In Vienna the human dimension - or, as the United Nations Secretary-General so fittingly called it, the "irreducible human element" - found a firm place on the international political agenda. This has given rise to great expectation among our citizenry and in all of us. It is incumbent upon the members of the international community to keep the promises made in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, for, in the end, the success of the Vienna Human Rights Conference will be measured by whether it was able to reverse the general trend and build communities which provide the individual with a decent human existence complete with civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. We have here goals that will have a global impact on the evolution of humanity, even if their implementation is only in the incipient stage.

In the past 12 months the situation in the Balkans has deteriorated dramatically. The tireless efforts of the Secretary-General and the peace mediators in Geneva have not yet been able to end the fighting or bring about

concrete prospects for a just and peaceful solution in keeping with the values enshrined in the United Nations Charter and in the November 1990 Paris Charter. Despite tremendous achievements by the High Commissioner for Refugees and other humanitarian organizations, and the many thousands of troops in the service of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to claim thousands of lives.

Thus far over 200,000 people have been killed, and another 2 million have been driven from their homes or forced to flee. Entire towns and districts lie in ruins. Several cities have been declared safe areas by the United Nations, but life within them has still not returned to normal. Although the violation of the independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and of human rights by the Serbian side, was condemned by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) as early as April of last year, and "ethnic cleansing" has come under the harshest criticism in the world community, there has still been no progress in halting that abominable practice. The most serious violations of human rights continue to be the order of the day. In the meantime, there is already evidence that the cruel methods used by the aggressor have been emulated by the victims. Austria has condemned this criminal behaviour in the strongest terms and will tirelessly continue to demand that it cease, no matter where it takes place or who its victims are.

Fundamental principles of international order, as they were precisely defined and affirmed at the London Conference in August last year, continue to be grossly disregarded. Specific resolutions, such as the monitoring of frontiers between Bosnia and Serbia or the return of refugees, have still not been implemented. The arms embargo decreed by the Security Council in September 1991 has done nothing but hurt the victims of aggression. As a result, the legitimate Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina is in effect being hindered from fully exercising its right to self-defence, under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, without being afforded adequate protection within the framework of a collective security system.

Against this backdrop, the proposed peace plans under discussion at the negotiations in Geneva raise a number of fundamental issues. In tenor, they all call for recognizing a status quo established by the use of violence and against all principles and declarations. This fact makes the spread or prolongation of the conflict likely. There is even the danger that Bosnia and Herzegovina, a State Member of the United Nations, will be divided up in a move sanctioned - even encouraged - by the international community. This would lend formal legitimacy to advantages gained by force. The most recently proposed partition plan for the country would seriously undercut its sovereignty by eliminating any effective central authority, in flagrant contradiction of the Security Council's renewed expression of support for the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 24 August this year.

This continuing violation of international law, human rights and humanitarian law puts fundamental principles of international conduct in jeopardy while seriously undermining the reputation of the international organizations involved. The failure of the system of collective security is especially alarming in this regard.

The same can be said for the situation in Croatia. Over a fourth of the country remains in the hands of the aggressor, contrary to the Cyrus Vance plan of January 1992, which was endorsed by the Security Council. Neither the demilitarization of these areas to be monitored by United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) troops, nor the return of the civilian populations that have been expelled, has yet been realized. Just a few weeks ago the capital of Croatia was shelled by ground-to-ground missiles fired from areas ostensibly under UNPROFOR protection.

Currently overshadowed by the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation in Kosovo remains tense. A rational solution is nowhere in sight. If anything, the likelihood of an outbreak of violence has increased in recent days. The expulsion of the long-term missions of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in July of this year could well lay the groundwork for even more brutal actions by Serbia against the Albanian population. All in all, we are confronted with a situation in which Serbia appears increasingly to be exercising the power of an occupier in a region whose population is almost 90 per cent Albanian and which for decades has enjoyed complete autonomy. Austria stands fully behind the efforts of the international community to bring the Kosovo crisis under control. In the end, a lasting peaceful solution to the Balkans problem is inconceivable without a just and equitable solution for Kosovo and for minorities in other regions.

Austria is focusing its efforts on providing humanitarian relief. Since the outbreak of the conflict, this relief has been handled primarily by the large-scale private charity appeal "Neighbours in Need", which provides on-site aid for the needy. Several other European countries

are also involved in its activities. The Secretary-General's recent words of praise for its services are sure to inspire its organizers to even greater efforts. Austria, with a population of just 7 million, is also caring for the needs of over 70,000 refugees on its own territory.

Though the recent course of events in the former Yugoslavia gives us little cause for optimism, the latest developments in the Middle East fill us with renewed hope. After a period of stagnation, the peace process begun in Madrid in 1991 has been given a vital new impetus with the recent agreement, on 13 September, between Israel and the PLO in Washington. However, the limited powers of self-government for the partitioned areas now agreed to are only an initial step. The ultimate goal must be to achieve full rights of self-determination for the Palestinians as part of a final settlement based on the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and other bodies of the Organization.

The pressing task now is to improve the difficult living conditions in the occupied territories through generous economic and financial aid from the world community. Austria, which has always been committed to a peaceful settlement in the Middle East, will maintain its support for this cause by actively participating in the international assistance measures now being planned. As part of the multilateral negotiations, Austria will seek further ways to make significant contributions in the areas of water and energy resources.

Nevertheless, a lasting peace in the region will only be achieved when Israel and the Arab countries conclude treaties based on the principles of land for peace, security and regional cooperation. From this standpoint, the agreement between Israel and Jordan on a framework agreement for peace is an encouraging sign, portending further progress, we hope, in the bilateral negotiations between Israel and Syria and Israel and Lebanon in the very near future.

We very much welcome the remarkable success of the United Nations operation in Cambodia. The two co-Presidents of the Conference - France and Indonesia - Japan and Australia, as well as the permanent members of the Security Council, have made an invaluable contribution to the peace process. We also particularly congratulate the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Akashi, and his colleagues, who have assured the success of the operation in the transitional phase.

Last year I was pleased to announce in the General Assembly the official end to the dispute between Austria and Italy regarding the treatment of the German-speaking and Ladin population of South Tyrol, a topic which was the subject of United Nations resolutions 1497 (XV) and 1661 (XVI) and which had been pending before this international body since 1960.

A year later I can say that the autonomy established for the German-speaking and Ladin population of South Tyrol appears to be effective in safeguarding the ethnic identity and the economic, social and cultural development of these ethnic groups, though certain problems remain unresolved and new problems have arisen from the dynamics of evolution.

The settlement of this dispute in June last year has helped to reduce tensions between the various ethnic groups. Even with this dispute settled, Austria would like to express its direct interest in helping solve new problems related to matters involving South Tyrol. Given the new spirit in Austrian-Italian relations since the settlement of this dispute, I am confident we will be able to solve any matters relating to autonomy in a manner agreeable to all parties involved.

The East-West confrontation has now been replaced by an array of regional armed conflicts. There is an increasing need for United Nations peace-keeping operations and increasing demands are being placed on them. This trend has accelerated in the past 12 months: almost 80,000 soldiers, police, military observers and civilian experts from 75 countries are now involved in the 17 United Nations peace missions around the world.

In 1992 the costs for these United Nations missions soared to $2.1 billion - twice the regular United Nations budget - pushing the Organization to its limits under the current financing arrangement. New approaches must be found to finance these United Nations actions. The Volcker-Ogata report, "Financing an Effective United Nations", points to financing options which could serve as a valuable basis for the work of the Fifth Committee.

The most urgent challenges facing the United Nations today are to develop global collective peace-keeping efforts and to overcome the financial crisis. In his "Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping", the Secretary-General outlines possible approaches to active peace management by the United Nations. It is now up to the Member States to give the Secretary-General the resources he needs to carry out his

ambitious plans. It is obvious that more security requires greater solidarity and increased contributions, whether in the form of troops or of higher membership payments. Given the current back payments still due, the first priority must be to motivate late payers to send in their contributions on time. Austria takes its obligations very seriously and is proud of having always fulfilled them on time.

The increasing consensus within the Security Council and its new decision-making capability have contributed to the quantitative and qualitative expansion of peace-keeping operations and to an increasing variety of needs by the community of nations for troops, officers, civilian police and civilian experts. The purpose of the large-scale international manoeuvres called "Exercise 93", recently conducted by the United Nations in Austria with great success, was to achieve the optimum management and coordination of military and civilian organizations in responding to disasters.

As things stand now, election assistance and monitoring, the protection of human rights, disaster assistance, reconstruction aid, humanitarian relief and tasks of a similar nature are already considered integral parts of the new United Nations peace operations, to be put into effect as soon as hostilities cease.

Austria heartily welcomes this new development, having itself sent troops, military observers, police or civilian experts to 12 of the 21 new United Nations operations since 1988. In keeping with the Secretary-General's "Agenda for Peace", the Austrian Federal Government decided on 25 May of this year to lay the necessary groundwork on a national level to put Austrian participation in United Nations peace operations on a new legal footing. We will now be able to comply more quickly and efficiently with future requests by the United Nations and regional organizations and with the military, police and civilian requirements they entail. To be more specific, there will be an initial phase for the setting up of a disaster relief service, a mechanism for seconding staff to the United Nations Secretariat, a staff course for high-level officers, police actions and humanitarian and disaster relief.

Austria is especially interested in the civilian components of peace-keeping operations. To this end, a training centre for civilian peace-keeping and peace-building has been set up in Schlaining, Burgenland, with the support of the Federal Government. In September of this year the first fellowship programme devoted to "peace-making and preventive diplomacy" was held there, a programme organized by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR); it was impressive in the quality of both its speakers and its participants. The successful International Peace Academy seminars on conflict resolution should also be mentioned in this regard. In cooperation with the United Nations, national and international experts will be trained in Schlaining in the civilian responsibilities of the United Nations peace operations. Special emphasis will be placed on the following tasks: sustainable development, the protection of human rights and the rights of national and ethnic minorities, humanitarian relief and the development of democracy.

In this age of interdependence, our efforts to secure peace globally and collectively cannot be limited to peace-keeping operations; they must also include economic and social developments. Hunger, underdevelopment, pollution, crime, drug abuse and refugee flows all pose equally serious threats to global stability and thus to world peace. The increasingly global nature of these dangers requires concerted international cooperation. The United Nations is the ideal forum to engage in the quest for sustainable development, that is, development which is compatible with ecological and social concerns. After all, the United Nations mandate covers the full range of human experience: political, economic, social and cultural.

The "Agenda for the People", as Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali so fittingly called it, is in fact the true challenge facing the United Nations as the twentieth century draws to a close. Large conferences such as those in Rio, Vienna, Cairo, Beijing and Copenhagen should give global answers to global issues. And no matter what the event - be it the Earth Summit, the Conference on Human Rights, the Conference on Population and Development, the Conference on Women or the World Social Conference - the focus should always be on the individual human being and his or her development and membership in the community.

In his declaration of principle before this year's session of the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General underscored the historic opportunity which the simultaneous structural reform and redefinition of United Nations policy offer for the United Nations Member States. The crucial test for the new United Nations will be the implementation of this "Agenda for the People".

Mr. de MARCO (Malta): Before beginning my statement, may I on behalf of the Government and the people of Malta express our profound solidarity with the Government and the people of India and with the families of the victims of the massive earthquake which has claimed the lives of thousands and left tens of thousands injured and homeless.

Mr. President, I wish to congratulate you on your unanimous election to the presidency of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. You bring to this important post a wealth of professional experience and personal qualities which will undoubtedly make their mark in the coming weeks and months.

In recent years the office of the presidency of the General Assembly has reasserted its rightful role and relevance in the light of the momentous events that are occurring in our time. We have always considered the presidency of the Assembly as relevant to the structure and performance of our Organization. The role of the President, in our view, should be not only to preside over the Assembly, but also to represent it and to speak on its behalf on the basis of its decisions and resolutions.

The United Nations system, with the General Assembly at its very centre, is increasingly becoming the effective focal point of international life, as its founders intended. The responsibilities entrusted to the presidency of the Assembly in this context are therefore both challenging and unique.

You are, Mr. President, taking over your new responsibilities from a predecessor who accomplished his task with resourcefulness and success. I wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to outgoing President Ganev for his contribution to the revitalization process of the General Assembly. Earlier this year President Ganev visited Malta on the occasion of the conference we sponsored jointly with the United Nations on the subject of Foreign Ministries in transition.

Within this context, may I welcome those States that joined our Organization during the forty-seventh session, adding a further dimension to the global representation and responsibilities of the General Assembly. When the United Nations was founded 51 States were signatories to the Charter. Today membership of the United Nations has reached 184.

Circumstances have changed, roles have changed and personalities have changed. However, the fundamentals of this Organization remain unaltered. Though situations may at times tempt us to re-invent the wheel, the requirements of the United Nations are evolutionary in concept, answering to the dynamism of world events, calling for our response to altered situations. This makes it impellent to move towards a second-generation United Nations which is strong in its resourcefulness and sensitive to the need for its own revitalization.

A review of some of this year's international events reflects the acceptance of the United Nations as a guarantor of peace, able not only to withstand problems as they arise, but also to absorb its own failures and mistakes.

Events in former Yugoslavia reflect not only the legacies of a past still present, but also the difficult nature of bringing the parties to an agreement at the negotiating table when so much blood has been shed, so much suffering inflicted and crimes against man's most cherished values committed.

Operation "Restore Hope" in Somalia did not fully realize this hope. Indeed, a series of events and mishaps has contributed to the loss of life of valiant soldiers of the United Nations peace-keeping forces as well as the lives of many members of the civilian population. A message of incomprehension has taken over the city of Mogadishu.

Developments in Cambodia, on the other hand, are a positive manifestation of the growing effectiveness of the United Nations in its peace-keeping role - an area to which the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has dedicated so much energy and commitment to ensure the well-being of so many millions living under the threat of conflict.

The signing of the declaration of principles by the Israelis and the Palestinians is a rainbow for the Middle East. It could well lead to a covenant of peace, breaking a circle of hatred and the legacy of death which has lasted for decades.

> "I believe that these two peoples, victims of the adversities of history, require the solidarity and involvement of all who can help in moulding events towards peace in the region." *(A/45/1000, para. 95)*

This was one of the conclusions that I drew in reporting back to the Assembly, as its President, following my visit to the occupied territories in those bleak days of the first weeks of January 1991. I commented that

> "The Arab-Israeli conflict has a dimension which goes far beyond the territory of Palestine. It involves not only the States in the region, the security concept of the Mediterranean, the relations with Europe and the super-Powers, but it also has an effect on the credibility of the United Nations and the political will behind its resolutions." *(ibid, para. 89)*

At the time we tried to explain to both the Israelis and the Palestinians that living in peace with one's neighbour brings that international environment, with secure and guaranteed frontiers, that all States in the region, including Israel, need so much to safeguard their future. In conclusion I stated that the purpose of the visit - the first ever by a President of the Assembly -

> "was intended to pave the way for those who, conscious of their political responsibilities, can help in contributing towards a lasting peace, which will give to the peoples in the region man's most coveted gift; peace in freedom." *(ibid, para. 98)*

One must give credit, in this context, to the receptive understanding of the then Secretary of State James Baker, with whom I had discussed my visit shortly after my return. With consummate diplomacy, he activated the Madrid process, leading to a dialogue approach long absent between the parties.

The leaders of Israel and of the Palestinians have shown moral courage which will, when pursued, send a message of hope not only to the peoples of the region but to many others who have endured long conflicts and seek the road to peace.

Developments in South Africa have also been encouraging. Important progress has been made in dismantling the condemned policy of apartheid and in bringing together the various communities. Malta is pleased to see that this progress has reached the stage at which South Africa can fully return to the fold of the international community as a respected member, mindful of its obligations both at home and abroad. We agree that the lifting of economic sanctions at this stage can and should encourage and assist the people of South Africa in completing their journey on the difficult road to genuine freedom, dignity and justice.

The approaching fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations provides an ideal opportunity for the international community to take an in-depth look at the means at its disposal in carrying out its endeavours for peace, security and prosperity. This anniversary must be seen as an act of regeneration. It will highlight the universal richness and diversity of an institution which now encompasses practically the whole of mankind; it will rightly bring to the fore its qualities of resilience and perseverance, which have been tested and demonstrated time and again over the half century; it will rightly recall the successes achieved over the years, in spite of often daunting difficulties; and it will salute the many individuals who have faithfully served, and continue to serve, a few with great visibility and prominence, most others quietly and silently, out of the limelight.

The process of regeneration must apply both to institutions and to objectives. Central to the institutional aspect is the role of the General Assembly. As past President, I remain personally deeply involved and committed to the revitalization of this Assembly. Even today, the international community has yet to fully exploit the uniqueness and relevance of the General Assembly. This is the only global forum where all States are full and permanent Members; where all States, regardless of size, power or wealth, have an equal and sovereign say; where all issues, political, economic, social, cultural or humanitarian, can be considered in their entirety and their inter-relatedness; and where the process of decision-making is at the same time a process of consensus-building.

The Assembly is not, and cannot be seen as, in a contest or competition with any other organ of the United Nations system. Its role is unique and pre-eminent, and its deliberations can only facilitate, enrich and, as appropriate, consolidate the decisions of other organs.

Some progress has already been achieved in improving the efficient functioning of the General Assembly. The recent adoption of resolution 47/233 is the most recent and welcome development. We must of course constantly remind ourselves that there has to be a clear purpose behind moves towards efficiency. In the case of the General Assembly, the purpose lies essentially in enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of its deliberative and consensus-building role, thus adding to its capacity to follow up and implement its decisions.

Mr. Fajardo Maldonado (Guatemala), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The size, composition and methods of operation of the Security Council have in recent years become subjects of intensive debate and sometimes speculation. The Council is a unique tool in the search for peace and security. It is

a blend of the idealistic and the pragmatic; it is at one and the same time a deliberative and a functional organ. The lifting of the cold war's constraints has had a most visible and creative impact, releasing and galvanizing the Council's peacemaking and peace-keeping roles. Efforts to enlarge the Council and expand its functions must come within the framework envisaged for the Council under the Charter. However, Malta shares with all other United Nations Members the legitimate expectation of transparency and objectivity as the hallmark of the Council's work.

The Council must remain conscious of the impact its decisions, especially the imposition of sanctions, could have on third parties. It is important to link the application of sanctions to a compensatory system for those countries which, through no fault of their own, have to bear the burden and pay the price of sanctions. When deciding to deploy United Nations forces, the Council must also be conscious of its responsibility for the safety and well-being both of the forces it deploys and of the inhabitants of the areas concerned. In all its actions, the Council must be inspired by the fundamental peacemaking dimension of its mandate and by the Charter's emphasis on the peaceful settlement of disputes.

One of the important objectives of any enlargement of the Council's membership must be to ensure balance and equity in its composition in terms of the present level of United Nations membership. Account must be taken of regional and geographical considerations; of the need to create reasonable opportunities for all United Nations Members to take their turn in serving on it; and of considerations relating to the size and status of individual United Nations Members.

An aspect that requires redefining in its application is that of regional responsibility for peace-keeping under Chapter VIII of the Charter. At the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Helsinki Follow-Up Meeting, Malta's proposal that the CSCE declare itself the regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the Charter was endorsed by the Helsinki Summit II. We think that through similar arrangements at the regional levels, peace-keeping operations may be more efficiently and economically dealt with by countries which, because of their regional obligations, can assume further responsibilities. This trend has already been manifesting itself in recent years, and one can only hope that it will be further applied and consolidated.

We believe that the concept of collective security depends on the evaluation of a number of factors. This must necessarily be coupled with an ever-increasing acceptance by nations that investment in collective security should in part be substituted for expenditure on national security. Within these parameters, it is essential that nations make forces available for peace-keeping purposes and ensure that they are adequately trained. Articles 43 and 45 of the Charter, which have never yet been applied, must be examined to see to what extent they respond to today's needs.

The concept of human rights has to continue to prevail in our discussions. Malta supports the proposal of having a United Nations high commissioner for human rights.

We consider the recent establishment of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia to be a pledge that heinous crimes against humanity will not remain unpunished. However, we believe that the establishment of an international criminal court with jurisdiction to try crimes against humanity, war crimes, international terrorism and global traffic in narcotics will provide an institutional concept for dealing with the international dimension of such offences.

In examining the institutional structure of the United Nations, we are repeatedly struck by the continuing absence of a capacity within the system to deal globally and comprehensively with the multiple issues of development.

Over the last five decades the Bretton Woods institutions have played a major role in the areas of money and finance. However, a more significant relationship must be built between the United Nations and these institutions.

The central capacity originally envisaged for the Economic and Social Council to bring together the underlying issues common to all the various facets of the development debate has remained equally elusive. This applies particularly with regard to entrenched disequilibrium, to the availability and allocation of financial resources, to technical assistance and to the far-reaching and often very sensitive aspects of sustainable development.

Within the context of the concept of a second-generation United Nations we have made a proposal to activate further and give an added role to the Trusteeship Council. The Council has served the Organization in dealing with Territories in its trust, most of which are today valid Members of the United Nations. Its present diminished relevance is in fact a reflection of its own success. Yet the concept of trusteeship lies at the very core of the United Nations.

We believe that the Trusteeship Council should hold in trust for humanity areas affecting common concerns and common heritage. It could have a monitoring function on the protection of the environment, extraterritorial zones, climate and - of paramount importance - the rights of future generations. These we hold in trust for humanity, and the Trusteeship Council can be the depositary.

Malta has always seen its active involvement and participation at the regional level in Europe as an indispensable dimension of its role as a member of the international community. We have consistently defined our objective of becoming a member of the European Community as a logical and natural culmination of our European vocation. This definition is rooted in Malta's political, social and economic realities, as they have been shaped by our historical and cultural heritage.

Malta has also consistently played an active role in the other European institutions which, together with the European Community, have contributed to the formation of a modern European consciousness. We see our role in the Council of Europe and in the CSCE as an expression and reinforcement of our deepest commitment to the dignity and freedom of the individual in society. We attach equal importance to the value of democratic principles and parliamentary practices, respect for sovereignty and mutual understanding between nations, respect for legality at both national and international levels and the need for improved international cooperation relating to both security and development.

It is only natural that Malta attaches relevance to the Mediterranean region, a region suffering the turmoil of problems in its midst. The importance of having its environment safeguarded, the relevance of its sea routes and its strategic role in linking three continents are all factors with consequences which go far beyond the boundaries of the region. Aware of this, Malta has shown continued interest and involvement in promoting Mediterranean cooperation. We have supported the idea of a conference on security and cooperation in the Mediterranean, and we have proposed the establishment of a council for the Mediterranean to be a forum for political, economic and social dialogue for the region.

It was stimulating to hear President Clinton speak from this podium of dreaming

> "new dreams in this age when miracles seem possible". *(A/48/PV.4)*

We all have our dreams for the future. Countries, large and small, rich and poor, dream of a future based on the betterment of peoples, international solidarity, mutual understanding and peace - peace in freedom. We who have the responsibility of guiding nations have to dream beyond the confines of our States and start genuinely believing in the brotherhood of man. We have to think that frontiers are not barriers, but signposts leading to a break-up of long-standing prejudices and great divides.

In this age when miracles are possible, when man has conquered space, let us dream of yet other miracles: that the 1.1 billion people living in extreme poverty will have their daily bread; that the slaughter of the innocents, the tens of thousands of children dying every day because of malnutrition and lack of adequate medicine, will stop; that the millions of refugees who wander from camp to camp, uprooted from their milieu, will return to their homes; that the billions and billions of dollars spent on weapons of destruction will be dedicated to hospital research to safeguard life; and that learning will be extended to all and that the dignity of work will be denied to none.

These dreams of miracles can come true. They are not just dreams. The political will of the international community and the dedication of many people to this cause can turn dreams into reality.

This is our agenda for peace. We can turn it into an agenda for peoples.

ADDRESS BY DATO' SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD, PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from Spanish):* The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of Malaysia, His Excellency Dató Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. MAHATHIR (Malaysia): Before I begin my statement, I should like to extend, on behalf of the Government and people of Malaysia, our deepest condolences to India for the devastating earthquake that resulted in the loss of thousands of lives and massive destruction of property.

I would like to join other speakers in extending my congratulations to Mr. Insanally on his election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. His election to that important office is an honour to his country, with which Malaysia enjoys warm and friendly relations. With his experience and ability, I am confident that he will discharge his responsibilities well and lead this Assembly to a successful conclusion of its work.

I would also like to express my appreciation of his predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev, who discharged his duties with dedication and earnestness and successfully guided the efforts to revitalize the work of the General Assembly.

I also take this opportunity to welcome, on behalf of Malaysia, the six countries which have joined the United Nations since last fall: Andorra, the Czech Republic, Eritrea, Monaco, the Slovak Republic and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Their membership will help to strengthen the United Nations in the execution of its increasingly complex role in the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of international economic cooperation.

Malaysia is a developing third world country. We should, according to the stereotypical Western concept of a third world country, be politically unstable, administratively incompetent and economically depressed. But we are not quite typical. We have actually made progress. We are quite stable despite a multiracial time bomb we inherited from our colonial past. We are fairly competent in the running of our affairs. Such is our progress that we actually contemplate building buildings which should be the preserves of our betters. And we dare to speak our minds.

These are unforgivable sins and we are for ever being reminded that we should not be too ambitious. We are told that our achievements are temporary, that next year we will go the way of their preconception of third world countries. Of course, last year and the years before we were told the same. But so far we have not obliged. We are, however, humbly aware that nothing is permanent. Our detractors may yet prove right.

That we do well and are not in dire need of their development aid is apparently not praiseworthy. Yet, when other developing countries perform badly they are chastised and told to do better or they will get no more aid or loans. But we will soldier on. We really should not care about what is said of us. Unfortunately, these negative remarks make life that much more difficult for us.

We need foreign investments and to get them we need a reputation for stability, competence and predictability. But when investors are told repeatedly that we are about to explode in racial violence, and so on, they are likely to invest elsewhere. Of course, what is said about us is untrue - lies. But these people apparently subscribe to the dictum that a lie repeated often enough will be believed.

We care for the well-being of our people. We want to develop so as to give them a reasonable standard of living. But we cannot be cowed into not speaking our minds. If the powerful nations do wrong, we will speak out against them even if they say we are unduly suspicious, that we have an exaggerated sense of our own importance, and so on. We can be belittled but we will continue to speak the truth. Here at the United Nations we will say what we feel we should say. Of course, the controlled "free" Western media will not publish it. But the few here will hear us. In any case, it is what we achieve that counts with us. We can do without Western approval.

Four or five years ago the world was celebrating the impending collapse of the "evil empire". The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was still intact then, but all indications were that it had given up the fight; that it was coming to terms with its main adversaries, the countries of the Western so-called free world; and that the cold war was drawing to a close.

Peace was breaking out all over the world and there was much talk of peace dividends. The arms race would end, there would be nuclear disarmament and, as the saying goes, swords would be turned into ploughshares. A brave new world would emerge: equitable, just and prosperous. There would be no oppression, no terror and no poverty or starvation. Everyone would embrace

democracy and the market economy, moving from authoritarian rule and command economies without a hitch. And a global policeman would see to it that every country stayed in line or faced the consequences. There was no end to the good things that would make up the peace dividends.

It would be wrong to say that there were no peace dividends at all - the Iran-Iraq war, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the war in Cambodia, some of the Central American wars, and now the violent Palestinian-Israeli confrontation and South Africa's apartheid were all resolved, partially or completely. But the world has not become a safer or a better place for a great many.

The Soviet Union did not just become a democratic practitioner of free trade, working with the good guys for a better world. It broke up into a number of republics and Russia has become dangerously unstable and ungovernable. The respected great reformer of *perestroika* and *glasnost* fame was ousted and disgraced and has been replaced by another, who seems to fare no better. The "evil empire" is no more. But the price in human lives and the displacement of people has been very high. And the price is still being paid.

In Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, much destruction and many killings have taken place and are still taking place. The old economic structure has been destroyed but the new one is far from being in place. Chaos, bloody chaos, prevails in many places.

Far from achieving universal peace, the world is treated to a spectacle of unparalleled brutality by the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In many countries of Europe, fascism has once again reared its ugly head. Houses are torched and people burned to death. And the voters actually approve.

During the cold-war days the protagonists constantly tried to provoke uprisings against Governments of the countries they were opposed to. They would provide financial and material help and would promise that they would protect the rebels or provide them with asylum.

With the collapse of the Communist bloc, the people there expected help when they overthrew their Communist Governments and established democratic, free-market societies, or they sought independence for their countries. In some instances they found their expectations justified. The Slovenes and the Croats enjoyed the full support of the Europeans and were able to mould new nations. But the Iraqi Kurds and the Bosnians learned that they thought wrong. It is only coincidental that both are Muslim communities.

The most tragic case is that of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The crime of the Muslims is that they wish for a non-Muslim, religiously heterogenous State. They were viciously attacked by the Serbs, who openly declared that they were doing so - and they are still doing so - to ensure that Europe remains Christian. And they are not being prevented from proceeding in this way by the Europeans.

The cruelties committed by the Serbs defy the imagination. In one case, which caused officials in one of the powerful countries of the West to resign in protest over their Government's passivity, a six-year-old child was repeatedly raped in front of her mother, who not only had to watch but was prevented from giving any help, and the little child died after two days of exposure. That is not an isolated incident. Muslim women, old and young, and little girls have been raped, brutalized and killed by the tens of thousands at the hands of the Serbs, and now the Croats. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims have died and are dying, and some 2 million have been forced to flee from their burning towns and villages.

And what do the erstwhile champions of freedom and democracy do? They actually prevent the victims from defending themselves. Instead, they try to force the victims to accept the partitioning and surrender of their territories, which have been ethnically cleansed by the Serbs and the Croats. Thus are the rapists and murderers to be rewarded. Only the most gullible will still believe that the vociferous champions of freedom and democracy will risk their necks for other people's freedom and democracy.

Malaysia would like to record its satisfaction over the acceptance of Malaysian troops to serve in the United Nations forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We regret, however, the exclusion of certain Muslim countries from participating in the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). Apparently, the distrust of Muslims is quite widespread. Malaysians are prepared to serve under whoever is appointed by the United Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We hope that our troops will be well supported. We will not protest if the United Nations decides to increase pressure on the Serbs, even through the mounting of a military offensive, provided due preparations are made.

When we add things up, the peace dividends accruing from the ending of the cold war have not been really substantial. If there has been any change, the debit side is much bigger than the credit side. The most glaring example is the reneging on the much-needed development assistance to poor developing countries.

Still, when drawing up the balance sheet since the end of the cold war one cannot but highlight two significant items on the credit side. The recent signing of the peace agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Israelis and that between blacks and whites in South Africa must be regarded as the biggest achievements of the post-cold-war period. Admittedly, there is still a great deal to be negotiated before justice can be rendered to all sides and before true peace becomes permanent. But the most crucial obstacles have been cleared. I should like to congratulate all the parties concerned for their good sense and their boldness. The extremists on both sides will not be happy. There will be more violence. But I am sure that those who are for peace and good sense will be as brave in peace as they have been in war.

I commend these accords to the good people of Northern Ireland. It is brave not to surrender even one inch, but it takes real bravery to compromise.

One may well ask why, in the face of the much-publicized failure of the United States-sponsored peace talks between the PLO and Israel, there should be this sudden breakthrough. The answer is to be found in the press statements. Good sense cannot prevail when the media demands that statements be made by each and everyone before and after each negotiating session. The negotiators are forced to take public stands, to demonstrate how tough they are and that they will not give even an inch. Having taken those stands, they were no longer able to accommodate good sense.

At the peace talks in Norway, there was no press, and good sense was able to prevail. There is this great democratic principle of "the need to know." But do we all really need to know every detail of every negotiation? Does every Israeli settler or Gaza Strip Arab, or, for that matter, every Tom, Dick and Harry in every part of the world, need to know everything about the negotiations? Must Palestinians continue to be killed and be made homeless because everybody needs to know what was said by whom?

This need for transparency, this right to information, is an invention of those who want to make money from the information industry. We should know about the bestiality of the Serbs in Bosnia so that we may react, but that knowledge is largely denied us. On the other hand, day in and day out we are shown this parade of negotiators to a peace conference. Can the average man do anything worthwhile as a result of seeing the daily TV report?

We live in the information age. There has been and there will continue to be an unending explosion in the field of information technology. Today, we can sit in our homes and watch and hear a war as it is being fought, witness with eyes and ears a beauty contest as it is being judged, and look through a microscope at a bug as it swims, all via the TV screen. We see all these things as they are, where they are, without a second's delay. We can watch murder as it is being committed, in all the gory details, and we can be shocked by it. But, then, we can also watch Michael Jackson doing his moon walk at the very moment mass murder and massacres of the most brutal kinds are being committed.

What we see and hear and witness is what the media decide we should see and hear and witness. If the media wants us to be shocked by a massacre, it can broadcast lurid details of that massacre. But if it chooses to broadcast Michael Jackson at the time the massacre was taking place, we will be stomping our feet in total enjoyment.

Clearly, the people who decide what we should see and hear hold terrible power. They can have us dancing in the streets or they can have us rioting in the streets with firebrands in our hands, burning, looting and killing. Can we doubt that such people are powerful? Make no mistake: the people who control the media control our minds, and probably control the world. They can make or break presidents, and they have done so. Countries can be isolated or accepted despite violations of human rights, depending on how the media present them.

And who controls the powerful world media? Not the national governments of tiny developing nations; not even the governments of powerful nations. A very few people in the West control all the international media. Some are journalists, but quite a few are not. Collectively they are Big Brothers.

Now they have an even more effective weapon in the form of the worldwide television network. Today they broadcast slanted news. Tomorrow they will broadcast raw

pornography to corrupt our children and destroy our culture. They are already doing that in Europe.

Today we can still control the reception. The day is fast approaching when only a coat-hanger will be needed to receive television broadcasts from across the world. We will have nowhere to retreat. Already the small nations are being accused of being undemocratic and limiting freedom because we do not allow reception of international television networks. We hope this is because our accusers believe in the freedom of the press, but we suspect it is because they monopolize the world media and stand to profit substantially from the freedom they insist every nation should have.

Malaysia believes in press freedom. But that freedom, as with other freedoms and rights, must be accompanied by responsibility. We will continue to expect the Malaysian media to be responsible. We will not forgo the need to enforce that responsibility. But as to the international press, we can only hope and pray that they will realize the damage they are doing. We will not interfere with them. They are free to report and to write any number of lies but we hope that occasionally they will cover the truth as well. Power corrupts, but power without responsibility is the most corrupting influence of all.

We have heard often enough of the need for restructuring the United Nations. We need this because the world has changed. It is not the world of the immediate post-Second-World-War period that we have today. The people who plunged the world into a horrendous war are now the good guys, telling the world how to be humane. The rapacious invaders of the past are now the good Samaritans, distributing aid to the needy. Will there always be no room for the reformed?

We talk of democracy as the only acceptable system of government. It is so good that we cannot wait for the democratic process to bring about its own acceptance by every country. It must be forced upon everyone, whether welcome or not. Yet when it comes to the United Nations, we eschew democracy. And the most undemocratic aspect of the United Nations is the veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council. We can accept some weighting in their favour, but for each of them alone to be more powerful than the whole membership of the United Nations is not acceptable; it was not before, it is not now, and will not be in the future.

For the time being, there can be some permanent members. But the veto must go. A formula must be found for new permanent members of the Security Council. Whatever the other qualifications may be, they must include a genuine and sincere interest in international welfare.

At the ministerial-level World Conference on Human Rights held at Vienna this year, a more comprehensive definition of human rights was presented. Many countries like Malaysia were smeared in Vienna for allegedly refusing to accept the universality of human rights. We subscribe to the universality of human rights, but not to the irresponsible variety propounded by the West. Human rights is not a licence to do anything without regard to the rights of others. The rights of the majority are just as valid as the rights of the minority or the individual. A society has a right to protect itself from the unbridled exercise of rights by individuals or a minority, which in the West has contributed to the collapse of morality and of the structure of human society.

If individual and minority rights are so totally inviolable, then you must allow the resurgence of nazism and its violently racist activities in Europe and elsewhere. But it is apparent that the West at least still thinks that racist violence is wrong. We hope they will also accept that freedom from poverty and the wish to develop are essential elements of human rights.

Finally, countries like Malaysia must take exception to preaching on human rights from people who willingly condone, and to a certain degree aid, "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Until they redeem themselves there, all their talk of human rights will sound hollow.

This litany of the woes of the developing countries and the world may seem endless. Actually, the list is far from complete. Trade and protectionism, aid and debts, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and pressures on environmental issues, Antarctica and many more have not been touched upon.

The world of the post-cold-war period is not a thoroughly bad place, but for the developing countries, including Malaysia, there is really very little to crow about.

A statement in the General Assembly is not going to change the world. But there is really nowhere else that the woes of the third world can be aired. Not to air them is to encourage supercilious arrogance on the part of those who are most responsible yet who still presume to extol their own virtues and to preach to others. Even if the benefit is minimal, the truth must be told sometimes.

The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from Spanish)*: On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Malaysia for the statement he has just made.

Dato' Seri Mr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, was escorted from the rostrum.

ADDRESS BY BEGUM KHALEDA ZIA, PRIME MINISTER OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I have pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Begum Khaleda ZIA (Bangladesh) *(spoke in Bengali; English text furnished by the delegation)*: At this juncture, on the eve of the twenty-first century, when the concepts of democracy, human rights and world-wide cooperation are on the ascendancy, I stand before this session of the United Nations General Assembly to share with Members Bangladesh's views on the current world situation. I am here to affirm our commitment to the emerging faith in the prospects for peace, prosperity and balanced development throughout the world. In the light of the realities of the world today, the United Nations is universally accepted as the most effective platform for multilateralism. I should like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our unwavering confidence in the United Nations.

Before proceeding, I should like to extend to Ambassador Insanally our most cordial greetings on his election to the presidency of the forty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are confident that his wisdom and experience will add new dimensions and dynamism to the activities of the United Nations.

At the same time, we are also grateful to our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his determined efforts, which have given new vigour to the activities of this forum. He has been guiding the United Nations with great dexterity and success through a critical period of transition. I should like to reiterate our continued support for his endeavours in fulfilling his important task.

Five new nations have recently joined us in the United Nations. I welcome them in our midst. We look forward to working in close cooperation with our new Members: Andorra, Eritrea, the Czech Republic, Monaco, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Slovakia.

An unprecedented rise in democratic aspirations world-wide precipitated the end of the cold war. There is a growing optimism about the prospect of a new world economic order based on equitable distribution of resources and human rights. Bangladesh is proud to have played a definite role in the world-wide resurgence of democracy. About two and a half years ago, we succeeded in establishing a truly democratic Government following the elimination of the old autocratic regime, which had lasted about a decade.

Democracy and development are mutually reinforcing. Our success on the road to democracy depends largely on our ability to tackle the challenge of alleviating poverty. We have many limitations: there is a lack of capital; we lag behind in technology. Handicapped by resource constraints as we are, it is not possible for us to undertake this difficult task alone: we need the cooperation of all.

Today, democracy is universally recognized as the best political system. Democracy aims at building a prosperous society by creating avenues for the unstinted development of human creativity and skill. If the process of development is disrupted, democracy and stability are threatened. Nurturing the emerging democratic spirit in the third-world countries calls for sincere cooperation from the developed industrialized nations.

Today there exists a yawning gap between the economies and cultures of the developed countries of the North and those of the developing countries of the South. But one must realize that poverty is not the same as bankruptcy: the South, where Bangladesh belongs, has a glorious past, when there was economic and cultural prosperity. We are now engaged in the task of building a new future based on our culture, tradition and availability of resources. For us, it is a matter of pride and satisfaction that our people's love for freedom has found concrete shape in the establishment of democracy.

We want to emphasize human creativity and human capacity to toil. The much-talked-about new concept of a

"human development index" does not seem to be adequate: we feel that it must capture the indigenous culture and values of differing civilizations. We believe that a new dimension will be added to the overall development framework of the less developed countries if this proposal is accepted.

Our prime objective is to build a prosperous society and economy by consolidating national independence, sovereignty, human rights and democracy. This calls for guaranteeing the security of small States like ours. As we work on new equations in international relations, the United Nations must take effective measures to ensure the security of small States. The hopes and aspirations of millions of people are linked to this. We feel that in the new world order that is taking shape following the end of the cold war, mutual respect between large and small States should be the only recognized norm. In order to ensure a future free from war and conflict, it is imperative that we ensure the sovereignty of small States.

We believe that the international rule of law has a vital role to play in ensuring the security of small and weak States. The priority areas in this context are: a river-water convention; the law of the sea; environmental protection; and the status of refugees, economic migrants and displaced persons. Universal acceptance of the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice without reservation has become an urgent necessity in the pursuit of peace.

We all live on the same planet. World civilization today and its accumulated store of knowledge is the joint achievement of all peoples of the world. Everyone has a claim to an equal share of the world's resources and prosperity. The great disparity that exists in the field of technology must be removed; therefore, we want a free flow of technology. We feel that the exclusivity of intellectual property rights is a great hindrance, frustrating the transfer of technology; we call upon all concerned to refrain from taking a selfish view in this regard. A similar discriminatory attitude is also evident with regard to the flow of information: this is contrary to the concept of a free flow of information throughout the globe. In order to establish a well-balanced world community, it is imperative to ensure the free flow of both information and technology.

Our existence is inseparable from the existence of our planet, and the existence of our planet is threatened today. The ecological balance is being disrupted, but the blame is being conveniently shifted to the developing countries: unfair conditions regarding the environment are being imposed on them. In many ways, the industrially developed countries are mainly responsible for environmental pollution. Given the resource constraints of the developing countries, their capacity to pollute the environment is very insignificant: they are more preoccupied with resolving their economic problems. We believe that the major responsibility for the prevention of environmental pollution lies, therefore, with the developed countries. Those industrially developed countries that pollute the environment in catering for their peoples' demands for high living must bear the responsibility of mending the damage done.

We are acutely conscious of the need to protect the environment. We are frugal in our use of fuel, electricity and water resources. Bangladesh's industrial sector contributes only marginally to environmental pollution. Our jute industry and jute products are more acceptable, in environmental terms, than various chemical and synthetic products. However, in the face of the massive expansion of the use of synthetic fibres that pollute the environment our jute industry is threatened with extinction. Millions of people in several countries, including Bangladesh, depend on the jute industry for their living. Thus, the production of synthetic fibres must be stopped, in the interests of the environment as well as of the millions who toil in the jute sector.

We call upon the donor countries and the aid organizations, in providing assistance, to pay due attention to our indigenous initiatives and development programmes. The success of the development process would thus become almost impossible. Unrealistic conditions create unnecessary obstacles in the way of the development process and the smooth progress of democracy.

In this context, I admit that a State cannot hope to become self-reliant through external aid and assistance alone. What we really need is liberalization of trade. Unfortunately, however, in the field of external trade the developing countries are being subjected to all sorts of discrimination by the developed countries. This must give way to strong and realistic North-South trade links based on equality. To this end, the immediate and satisfactory conclusion to the Uruguay Round of negotiations has become imperative. Together with development assistance, we seek trade and investment. In Bangladesh we have created a highly congenial climate for external investment. Contemporary experience has proved that the desired development cannot be achieved through dependence on external assistance alone; it is essential that trade and investment be expanded at the same time.

We are engaged in an earnest endeavour to achieve economic prosperity by building upon our indigenous heritage. We are striving to forge a more productive and efficient workforce. We have made considerable progress in the field of structural reform of the economy. Inflation is at its lowest level. After long years of recession, there has been a definite increase in the rate of growth in agriculture and industry.

We have also made considerable progress in the expansion of education. We have launched the programme entitled "Food for Education" as a means of ensuring the right to education of the poorer sections of our population. We aim to achieve a literacy rate of 60 per cent by the year 2000. We have initiated a national social programme with a view to restricting the population within a desirable level. Our efforts have brought us to the threshold of self-sufficiency in the production of food grains.

In consonance with current world trends, we have also subscribed to a market economy. As I said earlier, in economic considerations poverty is the main economic challenge that we face. In tackling this challenge, we have adopted a new development model, whose purpose is to ensure extensive participation by the people in the development process. We have adopted the "Daal Bhaat" programme, which envisages the provision of basic nutrition for the poor and deprived masses and the development of human resources.

We are expanding sanitation and primary health care facilities throughout the country. Special priority is being given to the integration of women in the development process. In this area, the Grameen Bank, the Rural Development Board and the Agricultural Bank are making a commendable contribution.

We must encourage regional cooperation as a supplement to our efforts in multilateral cooperation. Against this backdrop, the seven countries of South Asia set up the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). As the current Chairperson of SAARC, I am trying to intensify development cooperation between the member countries. During the seventh SAARC Summit, which was held in Dhaka in April this year, we adopted some specific programmes for poverty alleviation. Besides, initiatives have also been taken to further promote cooperation in various fields, including trade, education and culture.

Along with regional cooperation, we have attached priority to the development and strengthening of good neighbourly relations and to the resolution of outstanding bilateral problems with our neighbours. Unfortunately, however, some issues remain unresolved with our neighbour India, the most important one being the sharing of water. We have not yet succeeded in convincing India as to what is our fair share of water from the rivers that flow through the two countries. We share 54 rivers. Historically, and under international law, we have a right - an inherent and legal right - to the water resources of the common rivers. But since completion of the Farakka Barrage, India has been unilaterally drawing Ganges water upstream. Withdrawal of water during the dry season causes serious drought, while the release of excess water during the rainy season produces severe floods in Bangladesh. This has created unimaginable adverse effects on the economy and environment of Bangladesh.

The pledges given by India when the Farakka Barrage was commissioned remain unfulfilled. This unilateral withdrawal of water, in complete disregard of the interests of the people of Bangladesh, has brought more than 40 million people in the Ganges basin - or, rather, the Padma basin - face to face with catastrophe, with disaster.

The Farakka Barrage has become, for us, an issue of life or death. Owing to obstruction of the natural flow at the Barrage, a process of desertification is evident throughout the northern and western parts of Bangladesh. As a result, vegetation is dwindling, and, in the south, the spreading salinity threatens industries and agriculture with ruin. Increased siltation is reducing the navigability of rivers. Fish and animals will soon be in danger of extinction. Innumerable people, in various occupations, who depended on the river Padma for their living are becoming unemployed. Many are being uprooted from their homes and hearths.

While the whole world is voicing concern about protection of the environment, a large proportion of Bangladesh's population is being pushed to the threshold of poverty and destruction. This is nothing but a gross violation of human rights and justice. To put it simply, our economic structure is faced with disaster because of the Farakka Barrage.

India could have played an important role in strengthening mutual trust between the two countries if it had lived up to its pledges on the question of water sharing. We feel that this is still possible. We believe that the world community sincerely wishes to see Bangladesh succeed in its struggle to dislodge the burden of poverty that has accumulated over the ages. But how can we, with

our meagre resources, ever hope to achieve that objective if man-made obstacles stand in our way? Bangladesh wishes, therefore, to draw the attention of the world community to this issue, in the interest of establishing human rights, protecting the right to natural resources and ensuring the process of development. Something must be done urgently to end this inhuman treatment of the people of Bangladesh. We firmly believe that arrangements must be made to ensure a fair sharing of the water resources of the Ganges by signing a permanent agreement immediately.

We believe in the policy of friendship, cooperation and peaceful coexistence with all countries of the world. We have unwavering faith in the principle of the resolution of all problems with all countries, and particularly with our neighbours, through peaceful negotiations. Congenial conditions have been created for the return of the tribal refugees who left their homes in the Chittagong Hill districts and have been in India for a long time. This became possible following a bilateral understanding that was reached with India last May.

Despite obvious economic, social and environmental difficulties, Bangladesh has given shelter to 250,000 refugees from Myanmar. Bangladesh has not sent back even one single refugee by force. I am happy to report that after constructive negotiations with all parties concerned, including Myanmar and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a congenial atmosphere has been created for the safe and voluntary repatriation of the refugees. We hope this will lead to a permanent solution of the problem.

Our hopes for a new, peaceful international order were raised following the end of the cold war. But these hopes seem to be fading in the face of current realities. The forces of communalism, racialism and regional hegemony are raising their heads in different regions of the world. As a result, mankind is threatened. The blatant violation of the national and human rights of the Bosnian Muslims at the hands of the armed Serbian aggressors is a matter of great shame for the whole of mankind. The oppression and genocide unleashed by the Serbs against unarmed civilians in the name of the abhorrent policy of "ethnic cleansing" is a source of agony for all people of conscience. The unabated perpetration of this genocide naturally focuses attention on the unequal application of the concept of human rights. A nation and its existence as a State are being obliterated solely because of religious hatred. The double standard of supplying arms to the Serbs and the Croats while the Muslims remain unarmed is tantamount to violation of human rights. In the interest of establishing human rights and justice, we call upon the United Nations and all the powerful States of the world to take definite steps to preserve the independence and sovereignty of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bangladesh has always hoped for world peace and prosperity. Active participation in United Nations peace-keeping efforts has been a priority for us. Some of the significant examples of such participation are the monitoring of elections in Namibia, policing the cease-fire line in the Gulf, clearing mines and contributing to reconstruction efforts in Kuwait and assisting the United Nations peace efforts in Cambodia, Somalia and Mozambique. We strongly support the strengthening of the financial and institutional base of peace-keeping and its growth. We are concerned at the observation on the financial crisis of the world body made by the Secretary-General in his report. We urge the affluent Member States to come forward and assist in overcoming the crisis to keep the United Nations strong and effective.

The recent historic accord between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel is a positive first step towards the establishment of a long-waited peace in the Middle East. We welcome this initiative. We hope that Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State will be the final objective of these efforts.

We remain steadfast in our support for the struggle of the people of South Africa to achieve their cherished goal of equal rights and majority rule. In response to the appeal made here in the Assembly by Nelson Mandela, our Government is moving towards lifting economic sanctions against South Africa.

Vicious cycles of starvation and violence, a breakdown of central authority and endless conflicts continue to bedevil in varying ways the situations in Somalia, Angola, Liberia, Rwanda and Mozambique. We call upon the United Nations to take comprehensive measures to establish peace in these areas in a more effective manner.

Thirteen years ago, during a similar session of this forum, Bangladesh's great leader and a champion of the interests of the third world, the late President Ziaur Rahman, issued a clarion call:

> "We must face the challenge of the contemporary world. The need of the hour is for bold and imaginative action. We will not find solutions if we cling to outdated concepts and institutions. We must act in concert and work for a better and nobler life for all sectors of the family of mankind." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Eleventh Special Session, 3rd plenary meeting, para. 46)*

His words are all the more significant today.

We are poised at a critical juncture in the advancement of world peace and stability. No doubt violence, aggression, racism, ethnic and religious conflict and gaping social and economic disparities still exist. Despite these contradictions, there is today a greater confidence and conviction that a brave new world is truly within our reach. We are faced with a rare opportunity to sustain the momentum towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts, to strengthen the rule of law and to raise the quality of life in greater freedom. Democratic values, the human spirit, human solidarity and the appropriate realization of human development are central to achieving these objectives. Today, as we approach the end of the twentieth century, we look forward to a balanced, tolerant and happy world community where democracy, peace, development and human welfare will be equally available to all. This was really the driving force behind the establishment of the United Nations. We have spent half a century in pursuit of this goal. As we enter the coming century, this must not remain a mere dream. Let this be our pledge to the next generation.

The PRESIDENT *(interpretation from Spanish):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the statement she has just made.

Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia): Let me first offer my delegation's congratulations to Ambassador Insanally of Guyana on his election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. His elevation to this high office is a fitting tribute to his personal qualities and record of distinguished service to his Government and to the international community. We are confident that under his able guidance we will achieve substantive results in our work.

I also wish to express our deep appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria, for the dedicated manner in which he presided over our deliberations during the last session.

On behalf of the Government and people of Indonesia, I extend a warm welcome to the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic as well as to Macedonia, Eritrea, Monaco and Andorra upon their accession to membership of the United Nations. We look forward to closely cooperating with them.

Before proceeding, I should like to convey Indonesia's profound sympathy and solidarity with the Government and people of India in the wake of the massive human suffering and destruction visited upon them by the recent devastating earthquake.

This forty-eighth session of the General Assembly is convened at a time of sweeping global change and transition such as has rarely been experienced in modern history. It has given rise to revived hopes and new opportunities as well as to new risks and uncertainties. As the rigidities of the bipolar world have dissolved, earlier expectations for the emergence of a new world order have now given way to the sober realization that, instead, a new world disorder will be with us for quite some time - a disorder characterized by continuing turbulence, instability and unpredictability and offering an often perplexing panorama of mutually contradictory phenomena and processes.

The end of the cold war has led to a new climate in international relations and a number of encouraging trends and developments. Renewed confidence in multilateralism as a viable approach to the resolution of the crucial issues of our time has opened up vast new opportunities for the United Nations and a more positive phase in international cooperation. Better prospects have emerged for substantive progress towards solutions to many regional problems long considered to be intractable. In this context, fruitful cooperation has been established between the United Nations and various regional organizations, which have acted as partners in facilitating the peaceful resolution of conflicts. I therefore wholeheartedly agreed with our Secretary-General when he recently observed that multilateralism today is working more effectively than ever, as it should, for in essence

> "Multilateralism is the democracy of international society." *(The New York Times, 20 August 1993, p. A 29, "Don't Make the U.N.'s Job Harder")*

In South Africa the new round of negotiations which began last April has now yielded agreement on the establishment of a multiracial Transitional Executive Council and is progressing towards democratic elections early next year. Elsewhere in Africa, despite formidable difficulties and obstacles, practical frameworks for the resolution of issues have begun to take shape. In Latin America we are gratified to see an end to conflicts and the strengthening of security as well as political, economic and social development. In the Middle East a historic breakthrough has been achieved in the Arab-Israeli peace process. And in the Gulf region, there has been demarcation of the land border between Iraq and Kuwait, under the auspices of the United Nations, which we hope will be a further contribution to the improvement of the political and security environment in that region.

Recent developments have brought about a distinct improvement in the overall political climate in the Asia-Pacific region as well. Relations between countries that were once at odds with each other have normalized and are being continually enhanced. In Cambodia the final phase of the peace process based on the Paris Agreements has been consummated and has led to the rebirth of a revitalized and democratic Cambodia.

With the dissipation of the East-West confrontation, questions relating to disarmament and security have acquired a totally new dimension. Scenarios of deterrence have become irrelevant, while strategic premises that once guided nuclear-arms control and disarmament efforts have lost their validity. This quantum change has occasioned other encouraging developments. The successful conclusion of START II between the United States and the Russian Federation has significantly reduced the world's two biggest nuclear arsenals. Last January more than 130 countries signed the Convention for the elimination of chemical weapons, thus proscribing the military use of these instruments of death and mass destruction.

Last month, as we observed the thirtieth anniversary of the signing of the partial test-ban Treaty, I was privileged to preside over the special meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty in the context of the Treaty's Amendment Conference. There it was resolved that the pursuit of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban now taking place in the Amendment Conference and the Conference on Disarmament should be mutually supportive and complementary. We have also welcomed recent positive developments concerning nuclear testing, particularly the de facto moratoriums on nuclear tests observed by the nuclear-weapon States and their renewed commitment to work towards a comprehensive test ban. Especially laudable were the decision of the United States to extend the moratorium on nuclear tests until 1994, the commitment of France not to be the first to resume testing, and the declaration by the Russian Federation of its refusal to resume testing even if others did. We hope and expect that China will wish to do likewise.

It is indeed of critical importance that steps be taken towards the expeditious conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, for without it our efforts to extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty at its forthcoming 1995 Review Conference may well be in jeopardy.

As the threat of nuclear confrontation between the major nuclear Powers has receded, the dangers of nuclear proliferation now appear to be their major preoccupation. But, surely, the issue of non-proliferation should be addressed in both its horizontal and vertical aspects. It is for this reason that Indonesia has unceasingly stressed the urgent need for a comprehensive nuclear-test ban as the litmus test of our sincerity in securing non-proliferation, apart from the necessity for States to submit themselves to the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Another heartening development is the growing prominence of regional dialogues on security. The Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), for one, will afford the ASEAN member States and other South-East Asian nations, as well as the extra-regional Powers, a regular opportunity to exchange views and consult on security issues of common concern. As is pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, "An Agenda for Peace", such regional action for peace and security, as a matter of decentralization, delegation and cooperation with the United Nations could contribute to a deeper sense of participation, consensus and democratization in international affairs.

These encouraging trends and developments offer unprecedented opportunities for enhanced international cooperation for peace and development. But we should realize that these opportunities are fragile and fleeting in nature and, if not resolutely grasped, may soon be overwhelmed by the plethora of new problems and adverse trends simultaneously emerging on the world scene. Persistent conflict and violence, both between and within States; the virulent resurgence of ethnic strife, both ancient and recent; the menacing rise in religious intolerance; new forms of racism and narrowly conceived nationalism; and the alarming resort to terrorism and blatant aggression: all

these combine to obstruct the building of a more peaceful, secure, just and tolerant world. These problems and trends have also caused the disintegration of States and societies, which stands in poignant contrast to the integrative trends, based on growing interdependence, which at the same time have led to the coalescence of States into larger groupings for common economic and political benefits. Moreover, peace and security cannot be sustained unless the very concept of security itself is expanded to embrace such non-military threats as structural underdevelopment and mass poverty, acute resource scarcity and severe environmental degradation, which together with prolonged natural disasters conjure up the looming spectre of massive and uncontrollable cross-border migrations.

It is a matter of grave concern that while the United Nations is called upon to shoulder ever-expanding responsibilities in the face of these new challenges, it is at the same time shackled by a deepening financial crisis. If this perennial financial crisis is not quickly resolved, the consequences could be catastrophic for the international community and all its aspirations to peace and development.

It is Indonesia's ardent desire that the United Nations should become fully effective as the central instrument for a new and revitalized international order. Steps must therefore be taken to ensure not only the financial viability of our Organization, but also its fidelity to the dynamics of democracy which demand the fullest participation and engagement of all Members in the work of the Organization. Along with all the non-aligned countries, Indonesia holds that balance is essential in the relationship between the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General, in conformity with their respective mandates as enshrined in the Charter. Indonesia and the other non-aligned countries have therefore done their utmost to contribute to the consultations leading to the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 47/120 A and 47/120 B on "An Agenda for Peace". The Non-Aligned Movement will continue to contribute to the ongoing consultations on the other aspects of the "Agenda for Peace" and on the rationalization of the Committee structures of the General Assembly in order to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness.

Furthermore, Indonesia believes that restructuring and reform of the Security Council have become imperative in the light of the profound changes that have taken place on the international scene. We realize, however, that such a process should be carried out with caution and circumspection as it impinges upon some of the fundamental aspects of the Organization's purposes and functions. In 1946, the United Nations had 51 Members, six of which were non-permanent members of the Security Council. In 1965, when the membership had grown to 113, there was a corresponding increase in the non-permanent membership to 10. But despite the fact that more than a quarter of a century has elapsed, during which the membership of the United Nations has increased to 183, there has been no proportionate increase in the Council's membership. A serious review and reappraisal of the Council's membership is necessary to ensure a more equitable and balanced representation. An expansion of the Council would strengthen it, making it more responsive and relevant to prevailing geopolitical realities and more open to the participation of small and medium-sized States, which constitute the majority in our Organization.

Indonesia is also firmly of the view that an increase in membership of the Council should allow for new members which, if they are not to be given the veto power, should at least serve as permanent members. They should join the Council on the basis of a combination of appropriate criteria that would adequately reflect the political, economic and demographic realities of the world today in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Such a judicious approach, in addition to one based solely on equitable geographic distribution, would enhance not only the Council's representative character but also its moral authority and practical effectiveness.

The peace process in the Middle East has finally overcome the paralysis that has gripped it over the past 10 negotiating sessions. Indonesia has welcomed the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Palestinian interim self-government arrangements in the occupied territories as a historic breakthrough in efforts to put an end to decades of armed conflict and confrontation and to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement. My Government has equally welcomed the agreement on a common agenda in the context of the Jordan-Israeli peace negotiations, as well as the act of mutual recognition by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel. It is also clearly understood that these first steps on the Palestinian question are an integral and non-prejudicial part of the entire peace process, which envisages a transitional period not to exceed five years and continuing negotiations leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) in particular.

We applaud the fact that, with the implementation of these arrangements, almost half a century of Arab-Israeli confrontation and Israeli occupation of Palestine will

finally be coming to an end, and that the national and political identity of the Palestinians will at last be universally and irrevocably recognized.

Although the significance of these developments cannot be overemphasized, we in Indonesia are aware that obstacles and ambiguities still abound on the long and arduous road towards a just and comprehensive settlement. Above all, the scrupulous implementation of everything that has been agreed upon will be of crucial importance. Hence, there is an obvious need for the United Nations to play an active and effective role throughout the ongoing peace process. Indonesia reiterates its unflinching support for the struggle of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, to secure their inalienable rights to self-determination, full sovereignty and independence in their own homeland. Equally, we call upon Israel to withdraw from all illegally occupied Palestinian and Arab lands, including Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan Heights and southern Lebanon.

In the tragedy that has engulfed Bosnia and Herzegovina, the international community is faced with the abysmally disturbing prospect of the forcible dismantling of a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society, the brutal decimation of its people and the gradual diminution of the territory of an independent and sovereign Member State of the United Nations. The Security Council failed to stop aggression and the abhorrent practice of "ethnic cleansing" because it was unable to defend Bosnia's sovereignty and territorial integrity while preventing the Bosnians from defending themselves by refusing to lift an ill-conceived arms embargo; as a result, two-thirds of Bosnian territory has now come under Serbian and Croatian occupation. This refusal to allow Bosnia to defend itself and to protect its people from being slaughtered cannot but be regarded as a denial of the right to self-defence under the Charter.

Under threat of a continuation of the unequal war, Bosnia today is being coerced into accepting a settlement that would partition its territory along ethnic lines and would practically reduce Bosnia to a cluster of small, incontiguous, landlocked and perpetually vulnerable Muslim enclaves within a so-called union of the republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Having initially steadfastly opposed this ethnic partition, its Government under President Izetbegovic has now reluctantly agreed to such a division. However, President Izetbegovic has done so conditionally, as part of a comprehensive agreement that would ensure the legitimate interests of Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of its basic territorial, economic and security needs, as well as with regard to secure access to the sea and between the Republic's component parts.

We cannot but view these developments as representing a blatant case of negotiation under duress and of enforcing peace without justice that may well lead to continuing violence, human suffering and a lack of security. The force of law should not be surrendered to the law of force. "Ethnic cleansing" should not be rewarded, and we should beware of establishing dangerous precedents that will haunt the international community in the future and in other regions of the world. My Government, therefore, will continue to give its full support to the Government and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina in their legitimate struggle to attain a just and viable settlement, with adequate international guarantees as to the political and territorial integrity of the country.

In Somalia, it is gratifying to note that normalcy has been restored in the greater part of the country and that the overall situation has undergone a major transformation. But chaos and anarchy continue to persist, especially in Mogadishu; this has imperiled the success of concerted international efforts to establish a stable and secure environment. We therefore sincerely hope that the leaders of Somalia will expeditiously seek to agree on viable transitional arrangements leading to political reconciliation and to the establishment of a broad-based government.

In South Africa, it is heartening to note the determined efforts by the leaders of the majority to engage in peaceful dialogue and negotiations with the minority Government. In a historic step towards ending decades of oppression and the evil of apartheid, the multi-party negotiating forum has scheduled 27 April 1994 as the date for the nation's first democratic elections leading towards the establishment of a unified, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

In Cambodia, in spite of the myriad difficulties it encountered, the peace process has now successfully completed the final stage of implementation of the Paris Agreements. We have wholeheartedly welcomed and endorsed the outcome of the elections conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). We have also welcomed the completion of the work of the elected Constituent Assembly with the promulgation of a new democratic constitution establishing a constitutional monarchy. And just a few days ago, the Government and people of Indonesia shared the sense of joy and deep satisfaction at the official inauguration of His Majesty

King Norodom Sihanouk Varman as Head of State, and the formation of the new Government of Cambodia.

We all realize, however, that even after the expiry of UNTAC's mandate and the installation of the new Cambodian Government, the United Nations and the international community should continue to support the people of Cambodia in the reconstruction of their country. Indonesia, together with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), stands ready to contribute its share to this effort.

Indonesia wishes to pay a tribute to His Majesty King Norodom Sihanouk for his visionary leadership in achieving this historic watershed in Cambodia's history, in unifying the Cambodian people and in bringing about national reconciliation. My delegation would like to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, for their contributions to a just and comprehensive settlement of the Cambodian question. We also pay special homage to all UNTAC personnel and volunteers who sacrificed their lives in the performance of their mission to bring peace to Cambodia.

Increasingly, the international community has come to recognize that, in a world dramatically transformed since the end of the cold-war era, lasting peace and security can never be assured in the absence of economic growth and development. Yet despite the profound and positive changes wrought in the political sphere, no corresponding improvements have been registered in the world economy or in international economic relations. It is therefore imperative that international economic cooperation and development are accorded top priority on the international agenda. The crucial development challenges for the 1990s continue to be the reinvigoration of world economic growth, the acceleration of the socio-economic development of the developing countries on a sustainable basis and, above all, the eradication of poverty from the face of the earth.

By all accounts, the world economy has failed to achieve substantial improvement over the past year. Belying almost all official forecasts, recession in the developed countries and stagnation in the developing countries have persisted. According to the 1993 *World Economic Survey*, world output will be outpaced by world population growth rates for the third year in a row. These negative macroeconomic developments have exacted an enormous toll on the developing countries. Consequently, poverty and underdevelopment remain the distinguishing features of the majority of the developing countries. In the most vulnerable economies, these have reached crisis proportions. Of especially grave concern is the prolonged critical situation in Africa, where tens of millions of people remain trapped in abject poverty and social deprivation.

In this era of increasing interdependence among nations and escalating globalization, issues and problems, especially those relating to growth and development, have become global in nature and therefore cannot be solved through short-term relief measures or through piecemeal reforms. Therefore, all nations, both in the North and in the South, should forge a new compact on development and, through a democratic partnership, fashion global solutions to these problems. Only in that way can we hope to restructure the international economic system, redress its imbalances, and render international economic cooperation more equitable and thus more viable and more mutually beneficial.

The non-aligned and other developing countries therefore call for the reactivation of a constructive dialogue between the North and South. But this time, such a dialogue should be based on genuine interdependence, mutuality of interests and of benefits and shared responsibility. The developing countries have expressed their readiness, both at the non-aligned summit in Jakarta last September and in the Standing Ministerial Committee for Economic Cooperation in Bali last May, to engage the developed countries actively in a dialogue on the key issues of the world economy. In this context, President Soeharto of Indonesia, as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, in his meeting with then Prime Minister Miyazawa of Japan as Chairman of the Group of Seven on the eve of the G-7 Summit last July, seized the opportunity to convey the non-aligned message, entitled "An Invitation to Dialogue", to the developed countries.

At that meeting, the Chairman of the Group of Seven and the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement concurred on the need to pursue a comprehensive approach to the integrated issues of trade, investment and debt strategies, including the review of the latter through the Paris Club. In this encouraging first step the initiative by the Non-Aligned Movement to establish a more constructive approach on issues of mutual concern and interest was welcomed by the Group of Seven, a fact that was subsequently reflected in the Tokyo summit economic declaration.

Indonesia strongly believes that these positive developments have bolstered the spirit of partnership already articulated and demonstrated at such meetings as the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD VIII) and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). This evolving spirit of partnership should now be further fostered and built upon during this session of the Assembly. Obviously, both developed and developing countries have a shared interest in jointly promoting this process across a wide spectrum of key economic issues of common concern. It is important that we in the Assembly carry the process forward in concrete terms, and for this purpose the non-aligned and other developing countries intend to submit a draft resolution aimed at the reactivation of dialogue between the developed and the developing countries. In this context, the Secretary-General should be requested to prepare a report on the modalities and ways and means of reactivating such a dialogue. We believe that this would complement his forthcoming report on an agenda for development, which will contain an analysis and substantive recommendations on ways to enhance the role of the United Nations in the promotion of international cooperation for development.

Such a spirit of partnership, lamentably, is conspicuous by its absence from some other forums, particularly the Uruguay Round negotiations, which are still mired in an obdurate impasse. In this regard we sincerely hope that the commitment made by the major developed countries at their recent summit in Tokyo will translate into effective action that will break the stalemate and bring about an equitable and balanced conclusion to the Round.

Among the most urgent issues on the global economic agenda is the external debt crisis of the developing countries which, contrary to perception in some quarters, is still far from being resolved and indeed continues to be exacerbated by volatile exchange rate fluctuations in the major currencies. Here too there is an obvious need for a coordinated approach, in the spirit of partnership, involving debtor and creditor nations as well as the international financial institutions. Such an approach should aim at decisive reductions in the bilateral, multilateral and commercial debt burdens, especially of the least developed and other severely indebted developing countries, in a way that would at the same time allow sustained recovery and growth.

Regrettably, all too often there has been a one-sided view of the causes of the debt crisis which tends to fault the developing countries for excessive and imprudent borrowing and for the misuse of the resources thus obtained. This view tends to ignore the link between the debt crisis, the paucity of resource flows on appropriate terms, and the adverse turn taken by the world economy since the early 1980s. This in turn explains the insistence on domestic policy reforms on the part of the debtor countries as the principal remedial instrument.

The truth is that the debt crisis of the developing countries is a manifestation of the shortcomings of the international system in providing access to adequate long-term resources on satisfactory terms. The gap was filled by private banks, lending on inappropriate terms. The crisis was triggered by deflationary policies introduced by the developed countries. Debt-servicing became an oppressive burden on the borrower countries when export earnings declined following the collapse of commodity prices and growing restrictions on market access to developed countries.

It is true that for a few middle-income countries the debt crisis may be largely over. The same can be said for the international commercial banks which in the past provided these countries with huge amounts of loans. However, for many low-income countries as well as lower-middle-income countries the debt crisis is far from over. Thus around 50 severely indebted countries continue to experience great difficulties in servicing their debt, at a terrible cost to their economies striving for recovery and development.

Urgent action is needed and debt relief for these countries should receive the highest priority, in particular for those among the 50 countries which are the least developed countries. To avoid any misunderstanding, Indonesia does not regard itself as being among those 50 countries. The Non-Aligned Movement has made this issue one of its priorities in South-South cooperation and a programme is at present being developed to extend concrete assistance to these countries to augment their efforts at debt management.

The debt crisis must be considered as one of the factors that led to the social crisis of the 1990s, for the latter is clearly a function of poverty and underdevelopment which in turn have given rise to internal political instability in many countries.

In the efforts of the United Nations system and various countries to address the social crisis, new and valuable insights have recently been gained. It is

irrefutable that in developing countries structural changes have exacted an exorbitant human cost. The developed countries too have not been spared from this crisis, as the prolonged recession has greatly strained their social security systems. Clearly, therefore, the social crisis also calls for a global approach, and indeed a consensus is growing that development and international cooperation "should put people first".

Indonesia shares this view and fully commits itself to the active participation of the people in the decision-making processes involved in development, and to the protection and promotion of human rights in all their manifestations, including the right to development. We therefore look forward to participating actively in such forthcoming conferences as the World Summit for Social Development in 1995 and the World Conference on Women in the same year. The World Conference on Population and Development to be held in Cairo early next year should provide an occasion for the international community to cooperate on the basis of the essential linkages between development, population and environmental protection. The proposal to convene an international conference on financing for development should be given serious consideration. We anticipate the forthcoming report by the Secretary-General on an agenda for development will mark an important milestone in international cooperation for development. With this report we hope that development will finally be accorded as much emphasis as that given to the political agenda.

A short time ago, the World Conference on Human Rights was convened in Vienna. Surpassing most expectations, the Conference adopted a Declaration and Programme of Action which affirmed, among other things, the principles of universality, indivisibility and non-selectivity in the promotion and protection of human rights. We are heartened by the fact that the Vienna Conference recognized that in the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms, the significance of national and regional particularities and the various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds of States must be taken into account. Approved by consensus, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action represents a new paradigm from which to promote human rights in a non-selective, cooperative and balanced manner. That being the case, the use of human rights as political conditionalities for economic cooperation is entirely against the agreements reached in Vienna.

This session of the General Assembly has been asked to consider the establishment of a post of high commissioner for human rights. It is Indonesia's considered view that such consideration should lay emphasis on the practical feasibility of establishing this post and on whether such action would in reality and practice enhance the promotion and protection of human rights as called for in the United Nations Charter. For it may be more beneficial to direct our attention to enhancing the authority and efficacy of the existing mechanisms and bodies, particularly the Centre for Human Rights in Geneva.

Mr. Salman Khurshid (India), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The end of the cold war has opened a new chapter in the history of humankind, a chapter full of portents as well as bright promise. The essential text of this chapter is yet to be written, in this Assembly and in the various international forums where crucial issues are taken up. As the principal international institution for multilateral cooperation and negotiation, the United Nations has a central role in the shaping and fulfilment of that promise. All nations, developed and developing alike, can and should have a part in realizing that promise through constructive dialogue and democratic cooperation. In the course of this endeavour, the vision and aspirations of the developed and the developing countries can be forged into a broad and dynamic partnership that would effectively address the problems of today and successfully confront the challenges of tomorrow. We hope that this process has now made a modest but significant beginning.

Mr. SPRING (Ireland): I should like to congratulate Mr. Insanally on his election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. While opening our session, he rightly reminded us of the hopes now placed in this universal forum - to which we welcome six new Members - and of the growing need for what he described as a collective vision of our future.

Allow me to convey to the Government and the people of India the deepest sympathy of the Irish people for the victims of the earthquake.

We meet here at a time of great hope for the peoples of the Middle East. Years of bitter antagonism and conflict have yielded to agreement and, we hope, reconciliation between the two great historical traditions in an area that has seen far too much bloodshed. The signature of the agreement in Washington was an act of the highest statesmanship and courage. It deserves a

commensurate response from the other countries of the region and from the international community.

I welcome President Clinton's speedy initiative in convening today a conference on aid to Palestine. We in Ireland stand ready to play our part, together with our partners in the European Community. We will increase substantially our aid to the West Bank and Gaza, and we will take steps to strengthen and develop our good relations with Israel and with the Palestinian people.

It is also a time of great hope for the people of South Africa. When the prisoner of Robben Island, Nelson Mandela, states, in Afrikaans to an Afrikaner audience, that what is done, is done, and looks to a shared future for all South Africans, it sends a powerful message to all of us.

A new South Africa is in the making. We have waited and striven long for this day. I am happy to announce that we in Ireland have decided to establish diplomatic relations with that new South Africa.

It is a time of hope, but also of apprehension, particularly for the people of Russia. The course of reform is not yet complete. I am confident that the way forward identified by President Yeltsin will continue to be endorsed by the people so that Russia may continue on the path to stable democracy and sustained economic development.

The recent changes in international life have brought great and lasting benefits to many: to those who endured authoritarian forms of government for decades and have now gained the freedom to exercise their basic human and civil rights; to peoples released from the super-Power competition that enabled dictatorial and repressive regimes to act with impunity; to the wider international community that no longer lives under the threat of global nuclear conflagration. Yet the optimism that characterized the early days of the post-cold-war period has been tempered by the realization that for every advance in the Middle East or in South Africa, there is an Angola, or a Yugoslavia, a Somalia, a Sudan. For all our progress, thousands continue to die in brutal wars, thousands more suffer from gross abuses of human rights and millions are denied their basic right to food, water and shelter. There is still a great distance to be travelled to a world of justice, equality and true respect for the individual.

People look here, to the United Nations, to help them travel that distance. Faced with this hope, this expectation - this demand - our Organization today must meet challenges of a kind that it has not had to cope with in the past, challenges qualitatively different from the international and regional disputes that have traditionally absorbed so much of the United Nations energies.

We are coming to understand better the interrelated nature of these tasks: the struggle to end war; to advance democracy; to promote economic development; to protect the dignity of the individual; to ensure freedom and the rule of law; to protect the environment; to deal with the problems of population - all are part of the same effort. Success in one requires progress in others.

We are coming to understand too that the activities of States and Governments require the broader cooperative context of the United Nations. As our problems are transnational, so too must be our response.

The fact is that we need a United Nations whose organization and decisions truly represent the will of the international community. We need a United Nations whose activities truly address the great contemporary challenges, and we need a United Nations that is not hindered by lack of resources in personnel and finance.

At no time in its history has the need to re-examine and strengthen the United Nations system been greater or more widely felt, and these themes of representation, relevance and resources are at the heart of the debate about the reform of the United Nations.

As the body charged with the primary responsibility for international peace and security, it is imperative that the Security Council should function well and with authority. The Council's response to the huge demands that have been made of it in recent years has been impressive. The number and scope of its decisions are greater than ever before, and the import of those decisions for States and for peoples everywhere is more far-reaching.

And yet, we must ask if the Council truly represents the almost universal membership of the Organization and reflects fully the great changes that have taken place in economic and political relations. These are questions of the deepest significance for international cooperation, but I believe that unless they are addressed now, the political authority of the Security Council and its capacity to act decisively and with confidence will be eroded.

Ireland therefore supports the case for an increase in the membership of the Security Council. I hope that decisions on this can be taken before the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in two years' time.

There is a need also for greater transparency in Security Council decision-making. The general membership, though it takes no part in the Council's decisions, is bound by them, and we are frequently called on to supply personnel and finance to implement the Council's expanded and increasingly complex mandates. We must work for a more interactive relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, and for more frequent and substantive reporting by the Council to the general membership. And we must look for ways to make the Assembly itself more effective.

It is ironic that for most of its existence, when the United Nations was not always deemed to be the appropriate forum for the resolution of major disputes, the Organization was for the most part adequately resourced. Yet today, when the demands for action by the United Nations have reached unprecedented levels, when ideological division no longer inhibits an effective United Nations role and when the approach to problem-solving at Security Council level is essentially cooperative, the Organization finds itself burdened with a grave and crippling financial crisis.

The Secretary-General has told us that the Organization is living from hand to mouth. He warns us that the financial situation could soon prevent the United Nations from discharging its essential responsibilities and undermine its political will and practical capacity to undertake any new activities. And yet the simple truth is this: for every dollar that the United Nations spends on the instruments of peace, the world spends almost $2,000 on the weapons of war.

It is simply not acceptable to call on the United Nations to undertake new responsibilities while declining or failing to provide the necessary resources. A significant improvement in the Organization's finances is now an urgent priority. I appeal to all Member States in arrears, and especially those on the Security Council, to comply with their financial obligations under the Charter. This is a moral as well as a practical imperative.

The impact of change is particularly apparent in the area of peace-keeping. In almost every crisis, on every continent, United Nations forces are deployed on increasingly varied and complex tasks. By the end of this year the numbers in the field may total 100,000. And individual operations are now very large: nearly 20,000 each in Cambodia and Somalia; almost 25,000 in former Yugoslavia. Ireland now participates in 10 of the 14 United Nations peace-keeping operations in the field. A significant proportion of our armed forces is at present engaged in United Nations peace-keeping duties.

But, beyond the scale of the operations, the nature of the tasks undertaken by United Nations forces has changed also. The initial decision to intervene militarily in Somalia for humanitarian purposes and the subsequent decision to mandate the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) to take enforcement action are new departures for the Organization. And they present new challenges for troop-contributing countries. In Ireland's case we had to change our law to enable our forces to take part in the Chapter VII operation in Somalia.

It is important for all of us - the United Nations, the troop contributors, and those whom we seek to help - to reflect carefully on our experiences and draw the lessons from the new large-scale operations in Cambodia, Somalia and Yugoslavia.

It is evident that existing structures both at United Nations Headquarters and in the field have come under very considerable strain. The mandates of major United Nations operations are now multi-faceted. We need mechanisms that will allow such mandates to be carried through in a manner that is effective, transparent and humane. I want to mention two points in particular here today.

The first is the imperative need to maintain peace-keeping and peace-enforcement operations within an overall political framework and to exploit every opportunity for reconciliation. Enforcement action, when it is undertaken - and I accept that it may be necessary - should be the minimum required and it should be carefully directed to achieving the political aims of the operation. For this reason, I believe that at the time the Security Council takes a decision to establish an operation, particularly one involving peace enforcement, it should pay special attention to the issues of command and control.

Secondly, there is a need to improve military planning at United Nations Headquarters and to ensure that the best military advice and information is available to the Secretary-General in his conduct of peace-keeping operations. To this end, an effective planning unit is required. Thought should also be given to whether the Military Staff Committee, which is provided for in the Charter but which has never functioned effectively, could have a contribution to make.

In Somalia, the overriding objective of the United Nations operation must be political reconciliation and national reconstruction.

There have been outstanding successes. One year ago, several hundreds were dying each day from hunger and malnutrition. Today, as a result of the work of the Unified Task Force (UNITAF), UNOSOM and the non-governmental organizations, people are no longer dying from man-made famine. A year ago violence was widespread. Today almost all of Somalia is calm.

The exception is south Mogadishu, where the efforts of UNOSOM have been continually frustrated and many, including 60 United Nations peace-keepers, have lost their lives. In pursuance of its overall aim of political reconciliation, the United Nations must continue its search for a peaceful resolution in Mogadishu, learning from and building on its success elsewhere in Somalia.

Most of the conflicts that this Assembly will address in the coming weeks are marked by massive abuses of human rights - summary executions, torture, detention, rape, mutilation. And even outside of these open conflicts the dignity of the individual is frequently violated by authoritarian and repressive regimes. At Vienna in June, the World Conference on Human Rights sought to strengthen the protection of human rights worldwide. Most of us who attended that meeting came away feeling that progress had indeed been made. It is essential that the agreed Programme of Action be given the highest priority and acted on by this Assembly. A United Nations commissioner for human rights should be appointed. The resources devoted to human rights activities in the United Nations system should be doubled. The United Nations human rights machinery, especially in relation to the protection of women, should be strengthened. And we must make decisive progress on the establishment of an international criminal tribunal to prosecute persons responsible for violations of humanitarian law wherever they occur.

The abuses of human rights in Yugoslavia have provoked a profound determination in the international community that those responsible must be brought to justice. The ad hoc approach, unavoidable in the case of Yugoslavia, points to the need for a permanent international criminal tribunal with an established jurisdiction and an identified body of applicable law. The General Assembly at this session should examine the valuable work done on this topic by the International Law Commission.

We can take advantage of the changed international situation to pursue our work on disarmament and arms control. We must intensify our efforts to halt the spread of nuclear weapons. I am heartened by the decision of some nuclear States to maintain a moratorium on nuclear testing and I call on others to do the same. Our objective must be a comprehensive treaty banning nuclear testing forever.

Ireland has proposed that the United Nations should elaborate a code of conduct for conventional arms transfers which would encourage States to exercise responsibility and restraint in their arms transfers and which would set out common principles to be observed in this area. We believe that, as the international community moves towards a closer understanding of its shared responsibility for international security in the framework of the United Nations, such a code would represent an important step forward in the area of arms control.

Last year Ireland called for an agenda for development that would complement and stand alongside the Secretary-General's "Agenda for Peace". We are pleased that such a report is now in preparation. Our vision of the future cannot ignore the images of deprivation and need we see every day from all too many parts of the world. The reality of this suffering is a test for all of us. The Irish Government is committed to doubling the percentage of gross national product devoted to official development aid in the period 1993 to 1997. Peace and development are not separable.

We must recognize what the Secretary-General has called the humanitarian imperative. The international community must be assured that the United Nations and its development agencies will respond quickly to emergencies as they occur. The creation within the Secretariat of a new Department of Humanitarian Affairs has been a useful step towards that end.

The international community must look squarely at certain incontrovertible features of our shared existence on this planet: climate change, a possible doubling of the world's population by the middle of the next century, pressures imposed by our patterns of production and consumption, great imbalances in the availability of technology and resources. In many of these areas, the Rio Conference and its Agenda 21 have identified the way ahead. I am pleased that the Commission on Sustainable Development and other organs provided for in Rio are off to a promising start.

We must acknowledge that the issues we address under the auspices of this Assembly and those which arise in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the Bretton Woods institutions cannot be separated. In all of these areas, our aim must be a peaceful, integrated international society in which our sense of the common good increasingly qualifies considerations of national power and immediate expediency.

As the dramatic developments in the Israeli-Palestinian relationship and the equally historic changes in South Africa have shown, progress is possible even in the most obdurate of conflicts if the protagonists are willing to look towards a common future.

Northern Ireland represents a challenge of similar dimensions to the British and Irish Governments and to the peoples of both islands. Some would say that the conflict is fundamentally incapable of resolution. I do not accept that, and I will not accept it. Like the vast majority of my compatriots, I yearn for peace on our island.

I want to see a comprehensive settlement which will enable men, women and children to go about their daily lives in peace and without fear. All of us in both islands are paying the price of past political failures. We should not ask future generations to bear the cost of further failure.

I have no illusions about the complexity of the issues. I know that there are no easy or quick solutions - no single step that can remove the necessity for a long and painstaking journey. But I believe that, with sufficient good will and determination, the Irish and British Governments and the leaders of the constitutional parties in Northern Ireland can lead the people they represent out of the stalemate which exists at present towards a peaceful and secure future. As I have said elsewhere, the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle are all to hand if only we can find the right way to fit them together.

The Irish Government is ready to play its full part in this. We will bring to any resumed talks the resources of good will, flexibility and imagination which we believe all participants must display if a new agreement is to be achieved.

It is painfully obvious that all traditional approaches have failed and that new thinking is urgently required. For our part, we are willing to look afresh at our own traditional assumptions and at our relationships with others to see if there are new approaches which can open a way forward. We are ready to accept the need for radical and innovative compromise as part of a new accommodation which will bring lasting peace and reconciliation to the island of Ireland.

Compromise does not mean asking either of the two traditions in Northern Ireland to modify its fundamental beliefs or, indeed, to suppress its objectives. It does mean asking each tradition to recognize that the other deserves equal respect and must be accommodated on equal terms. It means accepting that diversity can be enriching rather than threatening and that both traditions in Ireland must find a way to share the island on a basis of partnership and trust.

Peace and stability will not be found in any political system which is imposed, or which is rejected by a substantial part of the population who live within it.

What we need in the island of Ireland is a collective will to rise above traditional suspicions and animosities and a readiness to look beyond areas of disagreement to areas where we can work together to mutual advantage.

Peace is now the imperative, and the continuation of violence is the single greatest obstacle to the realization of our hopes. An end to violence would open up new possibilities and allow all of us to emerge from the shadow of a very troubled history.

It would, at last, help to clear the way for compromise and negotiation, leading to an agreement which would achieve a fair and lasting accommodation between nationalism and unionism in Ireland. We must lift our sights to the new horizons of possibility which developments in the Middle East and South Africa have opened for us. This is the objective of the Government which I represent. I believe we can have no higher objective.

Mr. SANON (Burkina Faso) (*interpretation from French*): Before I begin my statement, I should like to offer my condolences to the Government and people of India on the natural disaster that has just struck them. I should like to assure them, on behalf of the people of Burkina Faso, that we grieve most profoundly with them.

I wish, at the outset, to congratulate Mr. Insanally on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session and to wish him every success in the discharge of the important responsibilities thus made incumbent upon him.

I should also like to pay a tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria, for the dedication with which he presided over the work of the Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

I wish also to take advantage of this opportunity to welcome the new States that have joined our Organization. We look forward to their active participation in the work of the Assembly so that we might, together, strive to preserve the peace, bring development to our peoples and ensure justice among nations.

May I also convey to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the most sincere congratulations and encouragement of the Government of Burkina Faso in respect of his tireless efforts day after day to safeguard peace throughout the world and also to revitalize the United Nations system.

While the ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter remain as valid as they were on the very first day, the international community continues to suffer the aftershocks of East-West confrontation. What I said at the forty-seventh session remains true:

> "The collapse of one of the two blocs did not solve the world's problems. Rather, it emphasized the North-South split; old wounds that are still open; internal contradictions within regions; and divisions among nations." *(A/47/PV.21, p. 86)*

In Africa, prospects run from an anxious outlook in some cases to measured hope in others. In this connection, acting on his own convictions as well as on those of Burkina Faso as a whole as to the needed and indeed indispensable integration of our continent, President Blaise Compaore has become active in subregional mediation and is thus making our contribution to the realization of this grand design for Africa.

In Angola, the process sponsored by the United Nations and the international community as a whole is now being torpedoed by UNITA and Mr. Jonas Savimbi, with their refusal to accept the outcome of the elections. The suffering of the Angolan people has been exacerbated, and this today is the part of the world where, more than anywhere else, people are dying as a result of civil war. Having learned from the experience of Angola, the Security Council has issued useful, indeed necessary, recommendations for Mozambique. RENAMO is somewhat slow in implementing these measures. We invite them to pursue the path of negotiations, to overcome the reluctance shown, and to move resolutely with the Government of Mozambique towards reconciliation and reconstruction.

In Somalia, after an encouraging start, United Nations action is running into obstacles that are having an adverse effect on the very nature of the peace-keeping operation. We are still convinced that while firmness is necessary, dialogue and negotiation with all parties are equally necessary.

In South Africa, acts of violence continue. Each week the macabre death toll is mounting as a result of attacks on public transportation. This is not a climate conducive to significant, indeed decisive, elections. However, the will for change which guides the majority of the protagonists in the tragedy that is apartheid in its death throes must prevail over all manner of extremism. In view of this, Burkina Faso hails the statement made by the President of the African National Congress, Mr. Nelson Mandela, before the Special Committee against Apartheid on 24 September 1993.

As for Rwanda, Liberia and Western Sahara, Burkina Faso hopes the agreements achieved can indeed be implemented so that the people of these regions may at long last know peace.

The eruption of crises of ethnic, religious or other origin is continuing, while the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina goes on and on, in contempt of international law and of the Security Council. We must therefore welcome the fact that in Cambodia and in El Salvador the process set in train has led to a beginning of normalization, and we must encourage Kuwait and Iraq to abide by Security Council resolution 833 (1993).

While in political terms the picture is mixed, in economic terms it is bleaker. The world economy is in recession. Weighed down by its debt, by the fall in raw material prices, by the deterioration in its terms of trade and by natural disasters, fluctuations in climate, desertification and drought, Africa is staggering from one calamity to the next. Structural adjustment programmes have been squeezing even harder a continent that has been relegated to the sidelines notwithstanding its resources and the sacrifices it has been making. The problems are known, and to rehearse them here now would sound like a litany and sterile repetition. The solutions, too, are known. In this respect, the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s has yet to be implemented.

A year after the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, the commitments and the promises made have still to take tangible form. However, the same minority continues to lay waste the planet's natural resources, while poverty is increasing and putting down roots in regions where it used to occur only from time to time or was only a localized phenomenon.

The global village is no longer just a slogan; it has become a living reality that at the same time affects the concept of security. New laws are surfacing everywhere in an effort to stem a new deluge, immigration. These measures are an illusion and will remain so long as people do not realize, or refuse to realize, that the root of the problem lies in the socio-economic inequalities that afflict the world.

In addition, population growth will cause unbearable pressure if real development policies are not put in place now. The tragedy lies more in the concentration of resources for a minority than in their scarcity. A community that is aware of its shortcomings and blind spots can still heal itself if it has the will to find and to take the necessary medicine.

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade negotiations - the Uruguay Round - must be concluded as quickly as possible and must take into account the needs of the developing countries.

Once again, it is the concept of security that has led to the monstrous stockpiles of weapons of destruction. Nuclear weapons are the crowning achievement of this march towards the abyss. To limit the risks, a Non-Proliferation Treaty was opened for signature, and almost all States have been invited to sign and ratify it. This is a praiseworthy initiative, but it is not enough. For the Non-Proliferation Treaty to have any meaning, in due course the nuclear-weapon States must give them up, and we must see our planet totally and genuinely freed from the nuclear threat. The preservation of the species and of the planet is threatened in two ways: the nuclear menace and the harm we are doing to the environment.

Burkina Faso is participating actively in the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification and of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

It is interesting to note that the harm being done to the environment in the southern hemisphere comes more from the effort to survive than from the unbridled desire to consume at all costs. The relationship established between development and environment also establishes the relationship between respect for human rights and development. One of the great truths brought out and accepted at the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna, is that there is a right to development. We cannot talk about human rights if elementary human rights - the most elementary human rights - are compromised by economic, financial and trade policies and strategies to which some people fall victim. To commit oneself to human rights nowadays is to commit oneself to changing the world everywhere and to accepting in every individual the person that we want to be and to defend. It is humankind as a whole that we must defend, or nothing; any other approach means giving in to harmful and questionable divisions between people.

In the same context, the twin scourges of AIDS and drug abuse must be fought on all fronts, using all available resources. From 8 to 13 February this year Burkina Faso held a series of national seminars on drugs, in which we reaffirmed the need to provide help and support for the most disadvantaged countries in order to curb this threat.

We have deadlines in 1994 and 1995, and must prepare with hard work and dedication to confront then the problems of population at the Cairo World Conference; to promote women's rights at the conference in Beijing; and, in Copenhagen, to focus on and respond to the need for social development.

The problems I have enumerated require constant cooperation from everybody. As we leave the cold war behind, we have no better instrument for cooperation than the United Nations. However, the United Nations is in a worrying state because its finances are in a bad way, and that is because some of the largest contributors have not fulfilled their obligations. It is therefore difficult to talk about reforming, restructuring and revitalizing the Organization when the primary task has not been accomplished. This is the first problem, because it is the most urgent.

The second problem has to do with the chaotic situation in the world. This situation is giving rise to peace-keeping operations, and their frequency and diversity have had an effect - and in future will have an even greater effect - on the functioning of the Organization. We approve of the Secretary-General's pointing to preventive diplomacy as one of the solutions. In this respect, at the last summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity,

in Cairo in June 1993, Africa set up a conflict prevention, management and settlement mechanism.

The third problem arises from the Organization's structural inadequacy to respond to the nature of the problems it will encounter from now on. Here again, though we need imagination to open up new approaches and apply fresh solutions to old and new problems, we must not lose sight of the fact that everyone must participate in the proposed solutions.

The fourth problem stems from the notion of democracy. It has been repeatedly proclaimed to be a cure-all, but it cannot remain just a battle standard that we wave in front of the new troops who have just been won over to the cause. Democracy must be transformed into a means of action for achieving better things, for achieving more. Whether within States or between States, democracy is a plant that does not stop growing once it has started.

Thus we come to the question of how a body with limits can function for and on behalf of all. For the moment, other considerations apply to the Security Council, because it is the direct inheritor of the balance of power that arose out of the Second World War. Forty-eight years later, the debate can certainly be opened. However, as Burkina Faso said during the forty-seventh session,

> "Clearly, the role and composition of the Security Council must be reviewed. But we fear that the discussion might be limited to merely expanding a club whose members would continue to view their status as a privilege, not a weighty responsibility. The spirit and perhaps even the nature of the Council must be changed. Clearly, we must begin the debate on the Security Council even if we are still bound by the terms of Article 108 of the Charter. The democratization of international relations is necessary." *(A/47/PV.21, p. 87)*

It was in this political, economic, social and international environment that we heard the news on 13 September 1993 that two brothers, who had sprung from the same land but had until now refused to recognize each other, had met. Burkina Faso hails their mutual recognition. It is up to the Palestinian and Israeli leaders and peoples whether this is the useful and welcome prelude to their taking a long and complex path, accompanied by the international community, offering its best wishes and its good offices.

This hope is like a guttering flame that must be kept burning; it is the image of our human condition, which we must constantly watch over. Only together can we succeed in doing so.

Mr. HAMEED (Sri Lanka): It gives me great pleasure to see an eminent son of Guyana guiding this forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. Sri Lanka and Guyana have a long tradition of cooperation at the United Nations, in the Non-Aligned Movement and in the Commonwealth.

Sri Lanka also expresses its appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev of Bulgaria, who presided over the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

Before I proceed, may I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Government and the people of Sri Lanka, to express our profound sorrow over the terrible tragedy that has struck the people of India in the wake of the devastating earthquake this week.

I bring best wishes from His Excellency Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, President of Sri Lanka, and best wishes for the success of this session of the Assembly in its endeavours for world peace.

Sri Lanka welcomes the new Member States admitted to the United Nations this year.

We thank the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his dedication and courageous leadership in meeting the challenges of peace and development that lie ahead.

It is four years since I last addressed the Assembly. Our hopes voiced at that time for the post-cold-war global order are now being realized, although there are problems of instability in the international arena.

The current international political trend gives us fresh hope of relations being conducted between States in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Regarding Palestine, Sri Lanka has welcomed the mutual recognition between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel. We hope that the interim arrangements now being worked out will lead eventually to a comprehensive and durable settlement of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects.

In South Africa, the Non-Aligned Movement's resolute opposition to apartheid and its advocacy of a free, democratic and non-racial South Africa stands vindicated. As President Nelson Mandela described it last week, "the countdown to democracy" in South Africa has begun.

Cambodia, a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement, is now free. We welcome this development and congratulate the United Nations on its role.

These developments certainly give us encouragement and hope. But this does not mean that the world is now free from tension and disputes.

The situation in Bosnia gives grounds for a vote of no-confidence on the political leadership of our times. It is a situation which has shocked the world. It is clear that the international community is still incapable of rising above narrow and parochial considerations. It is vital that an early solution be found which will meet the aspirations of all the parties concerned.

We have watched with alarm the rising tide of racism in many countries, which violates the very foundations of their cherished goals and objectives. It is not relevant here to diagnose the causes, but these dangerous and ugly trends must be checked. This is not just a challenge to Governments alone. All men and women of good will must join together to fight this evil.

The implementation of recent arms-limitation agreements and the shelving of plans to extend the arms race into outer space have enhanced the prospects for genuine disarmament. Since 1991 world defence spending has been set on a downward course. We must bring about a successful conclusion to the 1995 conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Sri Lanka is pleased at the recent successful conclusion of the Convention on chemical weapons.

At the same time, genuine disarmament must also incorporate measures to reduce the flows of conventional arms. The uncontrolled movement of arms and explosives to extremist fringe groups threatens to destabilize small countries.

In a similar context, Sri Lanka wishes to draw the Assembly's attention to the initiative to enforce an international ban on the use of mines in warfare. The tragic consequences of mine warfare are visible in the thousands of amputees in many parts of the world and call for urgent international attention.

Today it is widely recognized that security can no longer be reduced to military considerations alone. Security must take account of economic crises, poverty, hunger, mass migrations, international terrorism and environmental pollution. These developments require the revitalization of the United Nations.

In 1995, the United Nations will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. The founding principle of the United Nations - the sovereign equality of all States - remains valid today. The Secretary-General has emphasized this principle in his report "An Agenda for Peace". The principle of sovereign equality must be put into practice if the bold proposals in "An Agenda for Peace" are to succeed.

As the transition to a new global order continues, the United Nations will come under greater pressure to live up to its ideals. However, in order to command the widest possible support, the United Nations must operate on the basis of an acceptable set of guiding principles. With regard to national disputes, United Nations intervention must be considered only upon the request of the Member State concerned. Indigenous peace efforts must be encouraged and respected.

Regionalism has received a new impetus. The United Nations should extend its fullest cooperation to these regional trends and initiatives. A lingering obstacle to regional unity is the question of border disputes. The Non-Aligned Movement has made useful proposals in this regard, including the suggestion by Sri Lanka that a border disputes commission be formed. Most recently, the Security Council itself had to lend its authority to resolve the border dispute between Kuwait and Iraq, and we support all relevant Security Council resolutions in that regard.

Let me now turn to South Asia, my own region, consisting of seven States and accounting for over 1 billion people. Some 12 years ago, I had the pleasure of inaugurating, in Colombo, the first meeting to launch the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Since then, it has been a matter of constant satisfaction to note the steady development of regional cooperation in South Asia. Today, we had the pleasure of hearing the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, current Chairman of SAARC, under whose able leadership SAARC is moving forward. Last year, during the period of our chairmanship, Sri Lanka guided SAARC in several

new directions. These included poverty alleviation, the establishment of the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA), the South Asia Development Fund and a Charter for Children. In Sri Lanka's view, SAARC should now extend its horizon beyond economic and social cooperation.

With a view to sharing our regional experience with the international community, Sri Lanka supports the subject of poverty alleviation as a major theme for consideration at the forthcoming World Social Summit. It is our firm conviction that structural adjustment programmes in developing countries must provide a safety net for the poorest of the poor until the fruits of economic growth are widely distributed throughout society.

Yesterday, we commemorated the third anniversary of the World Summit for Children. Within SAARC, we have already set ourselves certain attainable mid-decade goals for meeting the basic needs of the children of South Asia. We welcome the World Conference on Women in Beijing as an opportunity to focus world attention on issues related to women and development.

As an island nation, Sri Lanka has special interest in international endeavours to create a new legal regime of the oceans. In 1971, the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace was proposed by Sri Lanka. The world scene has since changed and the time has now come to examine new, alternative approaches. Yet another regional initiative by Sri Lanka is the Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Conference (IOMAC), a cooperative endeavour to develop the region's marine resources.

The commitment of the Sri Lanka Government to ensuring the human rights of all our citizens is central to all our policies, and we will maintain our policy of candid cooperation with the United Nations. The dictates of humanitarian law must be respected. Where economic sanctions are invoked as a tool of punitive action, let us ensure that the humanitarian needs of the people of the country involved are fully protected.

Neither the end of the cold war nor the new thrust of economic liberalism has in any way diminished Sri Lanka's commitment to non-aligned principles. At the Jakarta Summit, there was a consensus that the political campaigns against racism, colonialism and apartheid had now been largely completed. The central unresolved issue of our time remains the economic disparities between the developed and the developing countries. Economic interdependence is a global reality. We reiterate the Non-Aligned Movement's appeal to the developed countries to consider favourably the call for a new compact on development between the North and the South, a new liberal democratic partnership for global economic solutions. There is now a relative abundance of liquidity in private markets. Access to these resources is not easily affordable for the developing countries because of the private market rates. A mechanism is therefore needed to bridge what is available and what is affordable. Such an initiative is most urgent in view of the economic difficulties facing developing countries.

Furthermore, today there is increased need for global economic cooperation owing to the emergence of many new States. All the needed assistance must be provided for these new States to complete their journey to democracy. But this must not be achieved at the expense of other developing countries.

In South Asia, we have embarked on policies of export-led growth and trade and foreign-exchange liberalization. We have done so despite the severe effects on us of unfavourable trends in commodity prices and protectionist measures in the markets of developed countries. Our efforts at national and regional levels will succeed only if there is a reciprocal commitment to free-trade policies at the international level. In this connection, it is imperative that the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations be concluded soon, in a fair and just manner. We hope that the industrialized countries will be able to resolve the issues that divide them. At the same time, however, they must not concentrate on their own problems to the exclusion of a balanced result for all participants in the negotiations.

Sri Lanka is an island nation with a unique commitment to social welfare. For many years, it needed virtually no budget for defence. When terrorism broke out in such force, many thought Sri Lanka would disintegrate.

Most recently, the world was shocked by the brutal assassination of President Ranasinghe Premadasa, the duly elected Head of State. This act of terrorism, aimed at destabilizing the country, was confounded by the peaceful transfer of power within 24 hours, thus vindicating the strength and maturity of Sri Lanka's constitutional and democratic system.

The Government has never wavered from its objective of seeking a political solution to the North-East conflict. I myself have spent some 14 months negotiating with armed groups, to find a peaceful solution acceptable to all.

During these 14 months, there was peace in the North and the East but, unfortunately, at the end of this period these groups broke off negotiations for reasons undisclosed to me. I also presided for one and a half years over the All-Party Conference, which examined the question of a political solution for over eight months.

A Select Committee of Parliament, chaired by an Opposition Member of Parliament, has been working over many months to reach a political settlement. Thus the search for a political solution continues. In the thick of the conflict we have maintained the flow of food, medical and other supplies, and services such as education and health to the affected areas. Many have acknowledged that this is an exceptional achievement.

On the economic front, the Government has steadfastly followed open economic policies since 1977. As a result, Sri Lanka is today well on the road to attaining newly-industrialized-economy status. Foreign investment recorded a quantum jump last year, clearly reflecting investor confidence in Sri Lanka's economic stability and predictability. It is our firm conviction that in a multi-ethnic, multicultural society, sustained economic growth is the best defence against divisive forces.

When I addressed the Assembly in 1988, I suggested that we project our vision beyond this building, and beyond the resolutions and speeches, to focus on the impact of our work on the millions of people we represent.

It would be wise to remind ourselves that the maintenance of world peace is multidimensional and the United Nations political agenda must go hand in hand with its development agenda.

Our nations are all travellers together on the road to the future. How will the future judge us? It will not be by our military victories and parades of power, nor by our eloquent debates and sophisticated slogans. We will be judged by our success in turning weapons into tools of development, in banishing poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance and in learning to live in a sustainable environment in harmony with a fragile and finite world.

Mr. BOUNKOULOU (Congo) *(interpretation from French)*: Like previous speakers, I would like to seek your indulgence before I start my statement as I associate my delegation's voice with those who have spoken here and convey our very profound condolences to the delegation of India and to the Indian people and Government for the disastrous earthquake which has brought death to thousands.

It is a particular pleasure for me to extend to Ambassador Insanally my sincere congratulations on his well-deserved election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. I am convinced that his wealth of experience will guarantee the success of our work. To his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Stoyan Ganev of the Republic of Bulgaria, we wish also to express our appreciation for the way in which he performed his duties. I would also like to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his dynamism and for the numerous initiatives he has taken in order to promote international peace and cooperation. Finally, my delegation welcomes the presence among us of new States, whose admission to membership has strengthened the universality of our Organization.

As we do every year, we have once again reached the time when we assess the international situation.

The end of East-West confrontation, by reducing already-existing tensions and by promoting the settlement of certain conflicts, has engendered great hopes for peace and cooperation. But at the same time, it has unleashed forces that need to be channelled in order to avoid new excesses which will lead to fresh tensions.

"An Agenda for Peace" - very aptly reminds us of the existence of other serious issues threatening international peace and security as well as the future of mankind, such as poverty, the deterioration of the environment and the debt crisis. These various evils are indeed scourges which, because of the anguish and despair they generate, can destabilize many societies. Nevertheless, laudable efforts are increasingly being made to build a new world order based not only on democracy and development but also on the absolute need for respect for human rights.

Many countries have begun to democratize their political and social systems. These changes are accompanied by difficulties and shocks, for democracy is a difficult lesson to learn, requiring a lengthy apprenticeship that is made all the more challenging by a fragile economic and social context. The confusion of certain mentalities which are ill-prepared for change must be added to this, as well. Here, patience, good will and even the assistance of the international community are necessary if the worst is to be avoided.

In the Congo, the democratic process has been extremely bumpy. After the national conference which led to a laborious period of transition, elections were organized, as a result of which a Head of State, Mr. Pascal Lissouba, was democratically elected by 61 per cent of the votes cast. One might then have believed that the country was embarked upon the right course, but, alas, 25 years of totalitarian regimes took their toll. Dissensions within the new parliamentary majority are about to give rise to a motion of censure, which is to say the very least premature - scarcely three weeks after the formation of the first Government.

After numerous vain attempts at reconciliation, the President of the Republic was moved to dissolve the National Assembly to allow the sovereign people to give the country a clear-cut majority by which he could govern. This constitutional prerogative was challenged by the opposition parties, which further exacerbated the political crisis. The express will of the President of the Republic to opt for peaceful means, the mediation of the high command of the Congolese armed forces, as well as the good offices of the President of the Gabonese Republic, Mr. Omar Bongo, made it possible for an agreement to be concluded on 3 December 1992. This agreement not only enshrines the formation of a Government with a majority participation of the opposition - more than 60 per cent - but also entrusts the political parties with organizing elections to the legislature on an equitable basis.

The first round of these elections was thus organized last May without any major incidents and in the presence of foreign observers, who did not fail to attest to the correctness of the balloting procedures. The opposition, which found itself in a minority as a result of that vote, systematically challenged those results, demanding that the vote be invalidated by the organ in charge of organizing the balloting, whereas Congolese electoral law states that electoral disputes are the purview of the Supreme Court, which is the only competent jurisdiction pending the creation of a Constitutional Council.

Because of certain subterfuges, clever sabotage, delaying tactics and high-handed manoeuvres that ignored the best interests of the nation, the Congolese opposition deliberately infringed the institutional process which should lead to democracy and development. After the memorable national conference, no one would have imagined that the Congolese would find themselves in the situation of refugees in their own country. If the people's right to civil disobedience would appear to be a natural outcome of the Constitution of our country, civil disobedience should not be regarded as a synonym for destruction of the social and economic fabric. Even if the conditions for such disobedience had been present, the acquisition or the large-scale distribution of arms and weapons of war can hardly be understood, and even less their being used for the purposes of mass destruction and blind terrorism.

Is it conceivable that, when the vote has not turned out favourably, the streets, urban communities and innocent people taken hostage become pawns which are used in bargaining over political decisions? Plundering the property of peaceful citizens - is this something which can validate lost causes?

The acts of sabotage and systematic destruction perpetrated by bands armed by the opposition last July caused a massive loss of human life. To this we should add considerable physical and material damages. Today, 3,000 families - in other words approximately 15,000 Congolese - are homeless and their sole refuge are classrooms and student dormitories. Such a situation poses a serious threat to the new school year which begins in a few weeks.

Of course, the Government is making tremendous efforts in order to meet the vital needs of the displaced families and to reintegrate them into Congolese society. But, unfortunately, in a Republic with a ramshackle economy and which is financially bereft, it is impossible for this challenge to be met. That is why the Government of my country appeals to the international community in order to obtain emergency aid to assist all those Congolese who have been deprived of their property or who have been physically harmed.

Despite this tragic situation, which might indeed have elicited a rigid attitude from the authorities, the Republic's Government threw open the doors to negotiation. Thus, once again through the mediation of President Bongo of Gabon, an agreement - the so-called Libreville Agreement - was signed in the presence of foreign observers on 4 August last. This agreement, which confirmed the results of the first round, calls for the resumption of the second round of elections to the legislature initially boycotted by the opposition. As for the electoral dispute, it is to be decided by an international arbitral college which is made up as follows: two judges appointed by the Organization of African Unity, two judges appointed by the European Economic Community, two judges appointed by the French Government and one judge appointed by the Gabonese Government.

The Government thus has every hope that following upon this vote and the resolution of the electoral dispute, it will be able to lay the definitive groundwork for a real rule of law with the establishment of all constitutional organs.

This is the situation in the Congo today. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those countries and all those agencies which have been kind enough to help the Congolese people resolve a crisis which seriously threatens peace in the country and which could erode national unity and compromise the future of the democratic process itself. The Congolese Government would like to reiterate here, through me, its commitment to abide by the decision of the arbitral college and the verdict of the ballot boxes.

The Congo is going through a very difficult stage. The desperate state of its economy and its social fabric has led the Government to undertake economic reforms. These reforms have so far been unfortunately frustrated by political and social instability. These reforms deal, *inter alia*, with restructuring the State productive sector by the total or partial withdrawal of the State, the financing of economic recovery, the reorganization and renegotiation of the external debt and finally the defrayment of the social costs of this adjustment.

If they are to bear fruit, these efforts and the sacrifices they will entail must be sustained by financial aid, otherwise the Congo will remain mired in poverty and instability.

Far from being unique, the critical economic and social situation in Congo is but one illustration of a crisis that affects almost all African countries and many developing countries. Thus, to the political factors involved we must add major economic and social challenges. It is quite clear that poverty threatens the cohesiveness of States and brings about profound imbalances in the developing countries, endangering the very foundation of human rights. But there is one basic human right that continues to have pride of place: the right to development. Despite the numerous steps taken to date, the developing countries remain weighed down by the heavy burden of debt, and the increasing cost of servicing that debt is becoming unbearable for economies which are already in great trouble.

My delegation believes that resolving the foreign-debt crisis requires bold steps. Nevertheless, we are very much aware of all those efforts which are contributing to the settlement of that crisis. That is why we greatly appreciate the expression of solidarity from the French Government, which decided last year in Libreville partially to cancel the debt of medium-income countries, including the Congo.

After many initiatives which proved ineffective, the international community must finally give priority to growth and development in the poor countries by building, on the ruins of the former East-West order, a new order based on more dynamic and more innovative North-South relations that would promote attainment of the objectives of the International Development Strategy enshrined in this body. This Strategy should receive all the support necessary to promote the creation of an international trade system that is both open and non-discriminatory, with the successful outcome of the negotiations of the Uruguay Round; to encourage the conclusion of specific agreements to readjust commodity prices; and, finally, to find lasting solutions to the external-debt crisis.

It is acknowledged that improving the situation in Africa necessarily involves economic reform. Nevertheless, efforts undertaken nationally, subregionally and regionally have unfortunately not enjoyed the international support expected. The adoption of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s signified the failure of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. Unfortunately, we cannot but conclude that so far, this new development programme has fallen far short of expectations.

That being the case, my delegation welcomes the decision taken by the Japanese Government to convene, in cooperation with the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa, on 5 and 6 October next in Tokyo an International Conference on African Development, and we voice the hope that this Conference will lead to concrete measures.

The economic crisis which besets our countries is particularly damaging to young people. Juvenile delinquency, illicit drug trafficking, drug abuse and AIDS are all serious threats to our societies. It is essential that they be given close attention. In this connection, more solidarity should be displayed in order to eradicate these scourges.

My delegation supports the conclusions reached by the most recent session of the Economic and Social Council on efforts to combat malaria, dysentery and, particularly, cholera. The United Nations system must attach a high priority to Africa, taking into account the serious

consequences these scourges have for development programmes.

There can be lasting economic and social development only in a healthy environment. The results reached by the Rio Conference, enshrined in Agenda 21, are extremely heartening. They undoubtedly reflect a global consensus as well as a political commitment at the highest level to cooperation for the purposes of development and the environment. But the key to their success resides in the financial resources made available.

Today, more than ever before, the increase in natural disasters is a matter of concern to us all. That is why my delegation welcomes the Japanese Government's offer to host, in 1994, a World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, which will deal with the various dangers these disasters entail and identify the necessary guidelines under which they can be taken into account by the United Nations in its development projects.

Since we have boldly struck out on the path to building a State of law, my Government supports the international community's action to promote and develop human rights. That is why we welcome the results of the World Conference on Human Rights, held last June in Vienna, and reiterate our appeal to fund-raisers to help finance the various action programmes which were drawn up in that context.

The current session has started at a time when the persistence of local conflicts and the resurgence of hotbeds of tension are a daily concern of our Organization in its mission to build and preserve peace. Nevertheless, although we can welcome the favourable developments in certain situations, it must be recognized that a large number of them remain subjects of grave concern.

Among the former, we have the situation in South Africa. A number of factors today indicate that the abhorrent system of apartheid will inevitably be eradicated, even if tensions are still rife and there are still scenes of violence. The process of democratization in South Africa can no longer be in question. The fact that 27 April 1994 has been fixed for the first multiracial elections is proof of this. My delegation gives their due value to the efforts which have been constantly made by the South African Government to eradicate apartheid and to democratize the country. Furthermore, we support the request for the lifting of sanctions formulated by Nelson Mandela.

My Government believes that peace in Somalia can be restored only if Security Council resolutions 751 (1992), 794 (1992) and 814 (1993) are implemented, resolutions which, *inter alia*, call for the organization of a reconciliation conference and a national-unity conference.

Turning to the question of Angola, we regret to note that the refusal of UNITA to accept the result of the voting and the free choice of a sovereign people has once again plunged the country into hostilities, further complicating not only the process of democratization that had been embarked upon but also the peace negotiations which are currently taking place under the aegis of the United Nations. My delegation welcomes the adoption by the Security Council of resolutions 851 (1993) and 864 (1993) and supports recent initiatives by the King of Morocco, the President of Côte d'Ivoire and the President of the African National Congress.

The agreement recently reached between the Government of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front gives us reason to hope that an era of peace will come to that country, contributing to the strengthening of the bases of national unity. We hope that the Rwandese people, after recovering peace and unity, will be able to get down to the difficult task of rebuilding their country.

Regarding the cases of Liberia, Mozambique and Western Sahara, in which my delegation fully and firmly supports initiatives of the United Nations, we call upon the parties to the conflicts to have recourse to negotiation, to dialogue and to other peaceful means in order to restore peace and security in that area.

The Washington Agreement of 13 September 1993 represents a decisive turning-point towards settlement of the Palestinian problem, and it will contribute to an improvement of the situation in the Middle East. The signing of this agreement promises a new era of peace and cooperation for the peoples of that region.

Nor can we fail to commend the very fortunate outcome of the situation in Cambodia, where elections, organized under the auspices of the United Nations, led to the creation of a government of national unity.

Despite the involvement of the United Nations, the situation in the former Yugoslavia has not basically changed. My country supports all the initiatives taken by the United Nations - in particular, those that encourage dialogue and negotiation - with a view to ensuring the success of the talks in Geneva.

As in the past, the process of the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula enjoys the support of my delegation and my Government.

It is very pleasing to note that considerable progress has been made in the process of disarmament and the control of armaments. Unfortunately, the danger of war has not yet been eliminated, as there still exist a number of arsenals of weapons of mass destruction - in particular, nuclear weapons. For this reason my Government will continue to appeal urgently for general and complete disarmament.

Peace and development are complementary. Each depends on the other. Thus, the promotion of confidence and security, which are the prerequisites for the achievement of development targets, is becoming a new priority in Africa. Aware of this, the members of the Economic Community of Central African States, with the assistance of the United Nations, are now addressing themselves to progressive implementation of the work programme of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which was adopted by the General Assembly last year. That Committee, which adopted a draft non-aggression pact following its third meeting, held in Libreville, will hold its fourth meeting in Brazzaville in the Republic of Congo.

This indicates the political commitment of the States of Central Africa to the creation of a system of collective security through the promotion of confidence, security and development. These actions of the States of Central Africa must be seen as part and parcel of the machinery for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts that was set up at the most recent Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was held in Cairo in June of this year. The international community - particularly the United Nations - should give these initiatives the support that is necessary if their noble objectives are to be accomplished.

In recent years the United Nations has been working very positively on a number of fronts. Its efforts have lent it undoubted authority, especially in the settlement of conflicts and in the shaping of the new order, which mankind hopes will be more democratic and will generate prosperity for all. Nevertheless, there is now a pressing need to restructure the United Nations. This is especially true with regard to the question of enlargement of the Security Council and an increase in the number of its permanent members. Such a reform would tend to increase the effectiveness of that vital body, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. This is one of the fundamental aspects of the necessary process of democratizing international relations.

The Government of the Republic of Congo attaches major importance to strengthening the role of the United Nations, as well as to increasing respect for the principles of the Charter, which is a *sine qua non* for the advent of a new order based on justice for all, peace, prosperity and international solidarity.

Mr. TOURE (Mali) *(interpretation from French)*: At the outset, I should like, on behalf of the Government and people of Mali, to convey to the people of India our profound grief at the heavy loss of life and the massive material damage caused by the earthquake that has just struck their country.

I have pleasure in expressing to Mr. Insanally the heartfelt and cordial congratulations of the delegation of Mali on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. I wish him every success and assure him of my delegation's fullest cooperation.

Let me take this opportunity also to express our satisfaction at the exemplary manner in which Mr. Stoyan Ganev presided over the Assembly's work at the last session.

It is also a pleasure to congratulate the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on the constant efforts he has made since he became head of the Organization.

The United Nations now consists of 184 Member States. This confirms its universality, gives it further credibility and explains the renewed interest in seeing it fulfil its promise. Our warmest congratulations go to all the new Members. We assure them of our full readiness to cooperate with them.

The world is most certainly living through times of great change. Ever since the events of 26 March 1991, Mali has been resolutely embarked on a process of democratization. However, this process is unfolding in especially trying circumstances.

In strictly national terms, the transition to democracy, which was achieved through the elections of 1992, though essentially a success, is being prolonged by new

uncertainties. With regard to social values, one finds a serious identity crisis and a lack of orientation among the young, in the workplace and among the traditional players in the private-sector economy. There is uncertainty also about the way in which the new political institutions operate, as these need to go through a period of apprenticeship in a democratic context, where impatience and violence coexist with a readiness for dialogue and for solidarity. Uncertainty is to be found also with regard to the new mission, size, operation and performance of an administration in transition, which must be more transparent and accessible to people at the grass roots. Uncertainty is to found, finally, in economic development programmes characterized by the urgent need for in-depth structural adjustment and the need to reallocate public resources to satisfy priority necessities: a basic education, public health provision, village water supplies and maintenance of the infrastructure.

At the subregional level, which for Mali encompasses both western Africa south of the Sahara and the Arab Maghreb, we are dealing with such complex and difficult problems as instability borne of local conflicts, followed by human tragedy, because the number of refugees in the subregion has risen from approximately 20,000 in 1989 to more than 1.2 million in 1993; the slow pace of economic integration, despite all the very vocal declarations of goodwill, which is restricting growth in the subregion; and religious questions which are daily gaining more ground and subjecting political institutions to new trials that are more delicate, more difficult to define and cope with and more terrible.

The Government of Mali believes that to cope effectively and efficiently with those problems and the many challenges in the process of democratization, we will have quickly to restore economic growth and then develop human resources, the true way to a successful future, achieve medium-term and long-term stability and thus find the economic key to development. Finally, we shall have to guarantee balanced development and comprehensive financing for development.

In all this, our Government does not forget and, indeed, it is meeting its international obligations as well.

By the same token, we continue to advocate and to work internationally for a world of peace and concord where it should be possible to find a solution to all problems by dialogue and negotiation.

This courageous political evolution should be strongly supported because the adverse impact of a disadvantageous economic situation, along with drastic structural adjustment measures and problems linked to debt, compounded by socio-political tension, is having an adverse impact on the entire democratic process.

The international environment in which this session is being held is marked by many uncertainties linked to the life of the Organization and of the international community in general. The post-war period saw the emergence of new democracies and the strengthening of protection for human rights the world over.

Over the past three years the Organization has taken on a number of commitments. In terms of peace-keeping, the declaration made on 31 January 1992 at the Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the member States of the Security Council, set milestones to be reached in establishing a new international order.

While remaining committed to the quest for international peace and security, we believe that any peace-keeping operation must come within a precise framework defined by the Security Council. Any loss of control may jeopardize the very credibility of the Organization.

Notwithstanding the Organization's efforts in the search for international peace and security, hotbeds of tension, alas, persist around the world.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina inter-ethnic confrontation and clashes have reached unimaginable proportions. The international community seems, paradoxically, to be watching passively the breakup of a country upon exclusively ethnic and religious grounds. That is setting alarming precedents.

In Angola, despite the many efforts by the United Nations, the situation remains alarming. My delegation appeals to all the parties to commit themselves more intensively to seeking a just and lasting resolution of this conflict.

The situation prevailing in Somalia is a threat to peace and security in that region. The presence of the United Nations, through the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), should in principle hold out the promise of bringing peace to the country and a negotiated political resolution of the crisis. Humanitarian aid has made it possible to avoid irreparable damage being done, but we believe that UNOSOM II must attempt to silence the guns

and create a climate favourable to reconciliation among all Somalis.

Whilst areas of serious tension persist, we would do well to welcome the positive turn of events in the settlement of other conflicts.

In Liberia hope has been rekindled, with the recent signing of the Cotonou Agreement, the entry into force of the cease-fire and the setting up of the high Council of State.

The expansion of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) and greater involvement by the United Nations in implementing the agreement might lead to the rebirth of the Liberian State. This is the time and place to appeal to the international community immediately to create support funds and to implement the Cotonou Agreement.

In Mozambique the acceptance of a new timetable to implement the Peace Agreements will promote the implementation of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ). We pay tribute to the parties for respecting the cease-fire.

As to the conflict in Rwanda, we are reassured by the sense of responsibility being displayed by the Government and the Rwanda Patriotic Front. The signature in Arusha on 4 August last of an agreement between the two parties proves that a political settlement of a conflict is always possible if all sides have the will. We therefore welcome this determination of the parties concerned and encourage them to pursue dialogue and strictly and scrupulously to implement the requirements of the Agreement in observing the cease-fire. The United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) should strive, for their part, to consolidate this major achievement.

In South Africa the multiracial negotiations will certainly see the advent of a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa. The United Nations must pursue its cooperation with the Organization of African Unity to support the process. However, the Government in place must take forceful measures to put an end to the wave of violence sweeping the country. The insecurity is fertile ground for anarchy and disorder.

We welcome the turn events have taken in the referendum process under way in Western Sahara with the cooperation of all parties. The joint efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to bring about a negotiated settlement can, we are convinced, succeed if the parties directly concerned continue their cooperation. It is therefore necessary for their decision-making bodies to work closely with the United Nations Identification Commission to resolve the last remaining obstacles linked to criteria for identifying electors and establishing proof of identity. My delegation reaffirms its support for the process.

Mali has been following with keen interest the latest developments on the question of Palestine. The mutual recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the State of Israel, followed by the signing of a declaration of principles on Palestinian autonomy in Gaza and Jericho, mark a major step towards a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and the establishment of relations of trust between the peoples of that region.

My delegation hails the Israeli-Palestinian *rapprochement*, fruit of the courage and political realism of the leaders of both parties and the praiseworthy efforts around the world to make the negotiations a success. We invite all the parties concerned to give tangible expression to this remarkable spirit so as to bring about a definitive peace in the Middle East in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

In Haiti the signing of the Governors Island Agreement and the New York Pact should soon make it possible for the legitimate President of that country to return. We hail the steps taken by the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, which have made it possible to attain the results achieved so far.

Elsewhere - in Cambodia, Afghanistan and El Salvador - we praise the efforts to bring about progressive normalization.

With regard to the dispute pitting Libya against certain other Member States, the Government of Mali reaffirms its support for implementation of Security Council resolutions 731 (1992) and 748 (1992). We condemn terrorism in all its forms. In supporting the resolutions adopted in this context by the Organization of African Unity, the Arab Maghreb Union and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, among others, the Government of Mali hopes for continued negotiation and action from the Secretary-General. A just and equitable resolution of this crisis and a rapid lifting of the embargo would contribute to creating a climate of peace and

security in the subregion and to removing a major factor preventing the economic development of the peoples concerned.

As to the Korean peninsula, my delegation encourages the pursuit of the negotiation process set in train and strongly hopes that it will lead to the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas.

I now revert to development issues of particular importance to the African continent: the situation of the least developed countries; the problems of children and women and population issues; and environmental problems - in particular, desertification.

The adoption in Paris in 1990 of a programme of action for the least developed countries rightly gave rise to a great deal of hope. We cannot but note, however, that three years after its adoption, the economic results have not come up to expectations. According to a 1992 report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD):

> "For the least developed countries as a whole, per capita income declined in 1990 and again in 1991. There is little hope that 1992 will be better, and the prospects for 1993 are scarcely promising."

It is therefore important to abide by the commitments made at the Paris Conference aimed at improving the economic situation of the least developed countries.

By the same token, so far as the land-locked countries are concerned, steps must be taken to follow through on the conclusions and recommendations of the Meeting of Governmental Experts from Land-Locked Countries and Transit Developing Countries and Representatives of Donor Countries and Financial and Development Institutions, held in New York in May 1993, in implementation of resolution 46/212.

The Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children and the goals spelled out for the 1990s on that occasion have set new targets for improving the living conditions of children the world over. All members of the international community are called upon to contribute to the implementation of commitments made at that Summit. In this connection, we must also see to the implementation of the Consensus of Dakar of 1992, which emerged from the International Conference on Assistance to African Children.

My delegation has high hopes of international meetings to be held over the next several years on resolving social problems, both at the individual State level and internationally.

The World Summit for Social Development, scheduled for 1995 in Copenhagen, will be a key event for our Organization. We expect good results from that Summit and hope that it will contribute to narrowing the gap between social groups within a single entity, North and South.

The World Conference on Women, scheduled to be held in 1995 in Beijing, will also afford us an opportunity to review the various programmes and initiate further action aimed at establishing an effective policy to bring women into the development process.

Another important gathering will be the World Conference on Population and Development, scheduled for 1994 in Cairo. This Conference will make it possible to define a new strategy for developing human resources, having regard to economic and environmental factors.

Environmental problems now occupy an important place in national, regional and international development programmes. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, laid the groundwork for sound joint management of development.

Agenda 21, the Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity demonstrated the readiness of the signatories of those historic documents to move away from current production and consumption patterns. Implementing commitments made in Rio requires mobilizing substantial financial resources for developing countries and strengthening their scientific, technical and institutional capabilities.

Mali welcomes the creation by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in accordance with resolution 47/191. At its first session, held in June 1993, the Commission dealt with fundamental problems which must be solved if Agenda 21 is to become a reality.

One of the chief goals is to mobilize financial resources. Restructuring the Global Environment Facility (GEF), democratizing its management rules and decision-making rules and mobilizing additional resources must

facilitate the execution of the various chapters of Agenda 21.

Fighting drought and desertification is one of the main goals that African countries have set for themselves. My country, two thirds of whose surface is desert, and which has suffered the terrible impact of drought over the last 20 years, welcomes the setting up of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat drought and desertification. At the two substantive Committee sessions held respectively in Nairobi, in June this year, and in Geneva, in September this year, there was an evaluation of the problem of desertification. Information was exchanged and data that can be taken into account in future negotiations were collected. My delegation hopes that the current negotiations on the convention to fight drought and desertification will lead to a real commitment so that the international conference scheduled for Paris will be a real success.

The issues I have just raised show that the problems of keeping peace and maintaining international security, as well as the problems of economic, social and environmental development, are all major challenges that continue to face mankind as it approaches the threshold of the third millennium.

My delegation feels that to meet these challenges we must, in view of the fundamental changes since the 1960s, promote greater democratization and a fairer division of international responsibility. Thus developing countries that have won international sovereignty, and that represent nearly two thirds of the population of our planet, rightly call for representation on the Security Council as permanent members.

Meeting these challenges also requires close cooperation and real solidarity amongst all the players on the world stage. This means that it is more than ever necessary to reflect deeply on and re-examine, the principles and rules for international cooperation.

The restructuring exercise to revitalize the economic and social sectors of the United Nations affords us an opportunity to make our Organization more dynamic in development matters and to ensure that it plays a central role, in keeping with the provisions of its Charter and the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

My delegation, while welcoming the progress made in reforming the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and certain of its subsidiary bodies, believes that our thinking must go beyond strictly institutional terms. In any event, my country feels that the imperative of restructuring is to maintain and indeed strengthen the United Nations capacity for intervention in development matters.

In implementing this policy we must pay particular attention to furthering and strengthening South-South cooperation through socio-economic programmes based upon the realities within the developing countries. Indeed, the revival of economic and technical cooperation between developing countries is an integral part of a strategy aimed at restoring growth and development worldwide.

Finally, my country supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to make the administrative machinery of the United Nations more efficient by avoiding duplication and minimizing operating costs.

For several years now the world has been going through major changes. If these profound transformations are to benefit all mankind, they must be accompanied and supported by concrete action making it possible to guide them in the right direction. While these upheavals have been managed successfully by some States, their extent has taken others by surprise, and the problems have exceeded their ability to contain and control them. Lacking the means, they find aid from the international community indispensable. It is at this level that many expect intervention from our Organization, and we can indeed help.

The people and Government of Mali have made important, clear choices: first, to consolidate the strong suits of a Malian nation that is united, though diverse in its cultural and racial composition, as it is carefully and irreversibly building a progressive democracy; secondly, to carry out in-depth economic reform in harmony with the needs of worldwide free trade and with the concerns of our partners in the international community; thirdly, to implement a bold policy of involving our people in managing their own affairs and simplifying legislation and public programmes; and fourthly, to pursue long-term sustainable development in a framework of institutions for subregional and regional economic integration and in partnership with all our friends across Africa. We believe that the United Nations and the international community have everything to gain from supporting our original and exciting experiment, the hallmark of a new kind of international relations, at once nobler and more rewarding.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Albania, who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. DUMI (Albania): On behalf of the head of the Albanian delegation, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Albania, Mr. Serreqi, I am authorized to make the following statement in reply to the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece this morning, since my country was mentioned.

As regards the assistance given by Greece to Albania to overcome its present economic difficulties, I would like to stress that nobody in Albania denies the contribution of Greece, among the other European Community member States, to this end. The Albanian people and Government have never failed to express their gratitude to Greece. We reiterate it once again here, while recognizing that Greece has been given special aid through the European Community and the Social Development Fund of the Council of Europe to assist Albania. Meanwhile, we have never complained about the fact that this aid has been distributed mainly in areas where the Greek minority live.

With regard to the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion and the right to education by the Greek minority in Albania, I would like to point out that since the establishment of democracy in Albania tremendous progress has been made in this field.

I am proud to declare here that in Albania the existence of the Greek minority has never been denied, and this minority has never been deprived of the right to preserve and develop its national identity. The Albanians and the Greek minority have historical traditions of humanism and respect for the rights and dignity of each other. The ongoing democratic transformation has created favourable conditions for full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms established within the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) process, and particularly cultural, educational and religious rights. The policy of the Albanian democratic Government in the field of human rights, including minority rights, is crystal-clear. The best testimony to this is the invitation extended to the CSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Mr. van der Stoel, who has visited Albania several times to see on the spot the situation of the Greek minority. After having direct contact with local authorities, representatives of the Greek minority party, and representatives of educational and cultural institutions, as well as with common people of Greek origin, he reported the following conclusions: the situation of the Greek minority has never been better than it is now; there is no evidence of any kind of discrimination against the Greek minority; their situation will improve hand in hand with that of the Albanian people as a whole.

However, I would like to stress that, as people living in a country in transition, facing hard economic and social difficulties, all the people of Albania are experiencing deprivation of various kinds. We are not able now to make a sudden, speedy privileged improvement only for the Greek minority. We think that privileged treatment would lead to discrepancies of a dangerous social character.

Concerning the allegation made by the Greek Foreign Minister that

> "Albania cannot deny to the minorities within its borders what it itself asks for its minorities abroad." *(A/48/PV.12)*

I would say that Albania does not dare to misconstrue this rightful principle of international law, as stipulated in all the relevant international documents. This principle also calls for reciprocity, especially from those countries that deny the existence of national minorities within their borders, as does Greece. However, our position is firm, that no comparison can ever be made between the question of Albanians in Kosovo and that of some fewer than 80,000 Greeks in Albania.

It is well known that exaggerations and lack of tolerance close the path to dialogue and good understanding and lead to boomerang effects in politics. It is an unfair policy to play the card of extreme nationalism for electoral purposes. We are confident that this is a casual and passing event, due to the present Greek political situation. We are hopeful that sound reason, good will and fruitful and constructive dialogue will prevail in relations between our two countries.

The meeting rose at 9.40 p.m.